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# FINAL RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIST

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SOMETIME H.M. AMBASSADOR AT VIENNA

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## PREFACE

THIS concluding portion of my Recollections scarcely needs any introductory words. It comprises the last fifteen years of my official life, and tells my diplomatic story to the end. I can only commend it to the favourable notice of those who have kindly taken an interest in the preceding volumes.

*August 1905.*

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# FINAL RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIST

## CHAPTER I

### ON THE WAY TO GREECE, 1885

ON the 18th of February 1885 I left Stockholm with my family for Gothenburg, and thence had a very pleasant journey, for the time of year, direct to London in the old-fashioned but most comfortable s.s. *Bele* of the long-established Thule Line. Like the great mass of travellers from foreign parts who are daily disgorged at the Victoria or Charing Cross stations, I had never before approached London by what is its truly Imperial avenue, and, favoured as we were by a beautiful spring-like day, the passage up the Thames—assuredly at all times a most striking and indeed unique experience in travel—interested me far more even than I had expected.

Somehow the impression it made upon me recalled to my mind a story which had been told me many years before by Julian Fane. He was leaving the Embassy at St. Petersburg, in the old days when railway communication with the Russian capital was still incomplete, on board a steamer bound for some German port. Apprehending a tedious passage, he proceeded to take stock of his fellow-passengers, amongst whom

he soon singled out an intelligent-looking man—evidently a Transatlantic cousin. On entering into conversation with him, Fane thought it good policy at once to express his admiration of the astonishing strides made by the Great Republic in the paths of progress and culture, and of the marvellous energy and resourcefulness of its citizens. These, he ended by saying, conveyed in his opinion such valuable lessons that it seemed to him as if the education of an Englishman who had never been in the United States might almost be considered incomplete, and he, for his own part, felt quite ashamed of not having yet visited that wonderful country. In short, he very freely buttered the American toast; his new acquaintance impassively listening to this flow of buncombe, and, when it had at last come to an end, dryly observing, “Well, sir, it is your duty to do so.”

In the same way I would venture to say to those among my much-travelled compatriots who by chance have never had sight of the grand highway of the Thames, from its mouth to the giant city that lies astride of it, that it is almost “their duty to do so.” They will thereby have brought home to them, in the course of a few brief hours, a far more impressive object-lesson on the greatness of British enterprise and wealth than they could derive from even the most diligent study of the trade statistics with which the country is now being flooded. The tide that helps to bear the countless, deeply-freighted vessels up the broad stream, to mile upon mile of wharves and quays and docks, is a tide of Empire in very truth, and, if an outburst of Jingoism be excusable at any time or anywhere, it would be so to my mind on the deck of a steamer passing up this unparalleled thoroughfare of sea-borne traffic.

As far as we were concerned, the only drawback to this mode of arrival by the *via triumphalis* of our so-called nation of shopkeepers was that, through not getting up to Millwall Docks before nightfall of the 21st, and being detained there by somewhat vexatious Custom House formalities, we did not reach our distant home in Sloane Street until past 9 P.M. I now indulged the hope of enjoying two or three months' leave in England. Unforeseen circumstances, however, much curtailed my stay there, and reduced it to little over six weeks. It so happened that in the domain of foreign affairs our political horizon at this period very suddenly assumed a threatening aspect. The more than customary activity manifested by Russia in Central Asiatic regions brought about between the two Governments a marked tension which, soon after, culminated in the Pandjeh incident, and brought us to the very verge of war.

Shortly before leaving Sweden I had been able to furnish to Lord Granville information of some value on this question which came from a perfectly unimpeachable and dispassionate source, and revealed the sentiments expressed, in private conversations on Asiatic affairs, by the head of the Imperial Foreign Office at St. Petersburg, M. de Giers, as well as by the Governor-General of the Caucasus, Prince Dondoukow Korsakow, who chanced to be on leave from his command at this time. The pith of the remarks attributed to M. de Giers was that Russia might possibly be compelled "by circumstances"—these no doubt being partly the favourable opportunity afforded by the difficulties in which the British Government then found itself placed in Egypt, and partly Russia's own entanglements in Turkestan—to

advance further than she desired in that direction, and that she would not at any rate bind herself to stop in such advance. Prince Dondoukow, on his side—representing as he did the aspiring military element to which, by force of circumstance, the lead in these Russian warlike enterprises has always fallen, from the days of Tchernaeff and Skobelev to those of Alexeiev—was reported to have put the matter more tersely by saying that Russia on her Eastward march knew of no frontiers but such as she made for herself. “*Nos frontières marchent avec nous*” were the words attributed to the Governor-General, and unfortunately nothing could be in greater contradiction with the friendly assurances given to our Embassy in the Russian capital by the Government which was at that very moment engaged with us on a peaceful delimitation of the Afghan boundary.

Without attempting to go at further length into the inner diplomatic history of that critical period, it is, I think, worth pointing out, that this untoward recrudescence of Russian energies in the middle East curiously coincided with a recent marked *rapprochement* between Berlin and St. Petersburg, following upon something like ten years’ coolness—not to say estrangement. This coolness originated in the part taken by Russia, and more particularly by the Emperor Alexander II., with respect to the “French scare” of 1875, some graphic incidents of which have been lately given to the world in the Blowitz Memoirs. Shortly before, too, in September 1884, Prince Bismarck, as has since been revealed to us, had prevailed upon the Russian and German Sovereigns at the meeting of the three Emperors at Skiermiewice, to enter into the so-called *Rückversicherungsvertrag*, or secret treaty guaranteeing to each

of the two contracting Empires the benevolent neutrality of the other in the event of its being attacked; an arrangement the more remarkable from its being in some sense directed against the friendly Power with whom Germany had, only a few years before, come to the intimate understanding, for their mutual protection against aggression, which was later on perfected in the Triple Alliance.<sup>1</sup> The Skierniewice compact answered its purpose for a time, but was allowed to lapse by Count Caprivi after the fall of its author, the great Chancellor.

Through these greatly improved relations with her formidable Western neighbour—at that time in the full zenith of world power and influence—Russia had of course acquired a much freer hand. Indeed it might, I think, be pretty safely laid down as an axiom that neither of the two great Northern Empires can well engage in any active course of policy, without having previously, in some degree, made certain of what has been well described as a circumspectly benevolent attitude on the part of the other. In this respect, if I do not entirely misread it, the history of the relations between those Powers—from the far-distant days of the Crimean war down to the Austro-German war of 1866, and to my own recollections of the repudiation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris—shows recurrent symptoms of a tacit understanding (by no means excluding mutual watchfulness) between the bordering Monarchies, based on a readiness to concede something to each other's ambitions *à charge de revanche*. Similar symptoms might possibly be dis-

<sup>1</sup> The defensive Treaty between Germany and Austria was concluded on October 7, 1879, but was not made public till February 1888, after the signature of the Triple Alliance with Italy which bears the date of March 13, 1887.

cerned without much difficulty at the crisis of the present hour,<sup>1</sup> and have in fact been freely commented upon in such a sense by a more or less well-informed press.

But I must turn from this digression to the affairs with which I was now to be directly concerned. The threatening outlook in Central Asia reacted on the situation in the nearer Levant in the same way as it is to be feared that the actual conflict in the Far East can also scarcely fail to do. Although the great settlement of Berlin in 1878, barely seven years before, had, it was fondly hoped, set at rest for some time to come the rival aspirations and conflicting claims of restless Balkanic nationalities, the recoil from afar was already making itself felt and producing disquietude in the nearer Eastern regions. The first overt signs of impending trouble in the Balkanic Peninsula were the disputes that arose between the Governments of Servia and of the newly-created Bulgarian Principality on certain boundary questions, and about the asylum given in Bulgaria to Servian political refugees. These discussions, which covered the last six months of 1884, left behind them deep traces of ill-will that finally led to open war in the following year. The political atmosphere in the Near East was in fact sufficiently charged to justify our Foreign Office in the wish to see its representatives in that perturbed corner of Europe present at their posts. Some local incidents at Athens, which it is needless to enter into here, further contributed to render it desirable that I should repair to my new destination without too much delay.

Lord Granville none the less considerately made due allowance for the fact that I had been very little in England in the course of the last six years, and that

<sup>1</sup> Written in the spring of 1904.

my private affairs therefore urgently required attending to before I could once more take up my diplomatic wandering staff. I thus went through a few weeks of the earlier London season, during which I renewed my intimacy of days long past with a valued Vienna colleague, Christian de Falbe, who had now been for some years Danish Minister in London, and, through his marriage with the very wealthy widow of Mr. Gerard Leigh, had acquired in society a position quite unique of its kind for a Foreign representative in this country.

So kind a friend did M. de Falbe show himself to me that I may be not unpardonably partial to his memory. Certain it is at any rate that nothing could be more genial than the hospitality which he and his wife—the handsomest couple, though no longer young, that could be seen—dispensed in Grosvenor Square and at Luton Hoo, which fine place became in their hands the most comfortable and luxurious of country homes. Of course £60,000 a year goes more than a long way towards keeping up a large establishment, but it was the perfect organisation of the entire household, the thorough finish of every detail throughout the beautiful house, and the many choice artistic objects it contained—picked up at Christie's and other sales, which the Falbes much frequented—that bore striking witness to their great taste and discernment. Seldom within my experience have great riches ministered with so much intelligence to the more refined luxuries of life, and this without the slightest vestige of ostentation. But the era of the South African millionaire had not yet then fully burst upon the London world, bringing with it examples of a *faux luxe* and a proneness to excessive display which have since become such questionable features of much of the entertaining at the present day.

We went down to Luton for Easter, our first visit to that delightful place, and met there a small and pleasant party, amongst whom—besides a daughter of the house, charming Mrs. George Forbes—were the Swedish Minister, Count Piper, Percy Ffrench of Monivea, and the universally-popular Major Seymour Wynne Finch. Beautiful, I remember, was the musical part of the service on Easter Sunday in the private chapel, Mme. de Falbe taking a great interest in the organ and choir. Luton Hoo, with its historic memories of Lord Bute and its massive Georgian grandeur, has now, it is sad to think, passed into entirely new hands. Its last owner, Mr. Gerard Leigh, succeeded to it on the death of his step-mother, Mme. de Falbe, but shortly after he too died, when all its contents were sold, including some very fine tapestry that filled the panels of one of the large reception rooms. These tapestries, it may be remembered, ultimately became the subject of an interesting law-suit involving the correct definition of what ought in strict law to be considered as *bonâ-fide* fixtures.

Among my social recollections of London at this time are the dinners and musical evenings at the Duff Gordons', very old friends of my wife. The two kindly spinster ladies in Hertford Street, Mayfair—aunts of the late Sir Maurice Duff Gordon—were most hospitable, and entertained in a simple old-world fashion, having after dinner the very best of amateur music and an assemblage of artistic and agreeable people. These parties, which dated back to the days of old Lady Duff Gordon, will be remembered by many as a sort of landmark in a certain section of society, and only ceased with the death, at a good old age, of the younger of these typical English



gentlewomen of the fine old school; the elder one, known to her many friends as "The Captain," from the decision with which she ruled the family quarter-deck, still surviving.

Well worthy of mention, too, are the perfectly-appointed dinners and interesting concerts given by the Blumenthals in their picturesque and artistic house at Hyde Park Gate, which to this day continues to be one of the pleasantest *points de réunion* in London, paradoxically remarkable though it be for the poor acoustics it affords to so much charming music. The walls of the quaint, low-pitched rooms were decorated by Miss Jekyll, and Madame Blumenthal, with her own delicate-looking but clever hands, elaborately inlaid the mahogany doors and panellings with ivory, &c. The popularity of *Monsieur* and *Madame*, as they like to be called, grows greater year by year, and their Tuesday invitations seem to be more and more sought after. The Blumenthal parties rank with the equally beneficent and attractive Sunday musical afternoons of my old ally Mrs. Ronalds, for innumerable are the real kindnesses thereby done by both hostesses to friendless musical artists of all nationalities, too often rashly launched on the uncertainties and risks of a London musical season.

The date fixed for our departure for Greece now came pressingly near. Shortly before Easter (on the 24th March) I had kissed hands at Windsor on my new appointment, and on Easter Monday (April the 5th) my wife and I had a take-leave audience of the Prince and Princess of Wales, at which the two young Princes, whom I had not seen since their visit to Buenos Ayres, were both present. The Prince of

Wales, as I have said elsewhere, had been so good as to interest himself about my possible appointment to Athens, when I was passed over for that post and sent a second time to South America instead, and H.R.H. was pleased to express his satisfaction at the selection now made of me; both he and the Princess charging me with letters and particular messages for the Court with which they were so closely connected.

The private matters I had had to look after being finally disposed of, we left London on the 15th of April; our departure being marked by a series of mishaps, which, however trivial in themselves, have since seemed to me, when looking back upon them in the light of subsequent events, as absurdly prophetic of the difficulties I afterwards had to cope with in my new diplomatic sphere. We provokingly began by missing the morning express for Paris at Charing Cross, and, while waiting at the station for a later train to Dover, I was seized by a sudden attack of faintness and prostration, which prevented our proceeding on our journey before the afternoon. To complete our *contretemps* a butler, whom we had engaged only a few days before with the best of characters, showed such signs of intoxication on our arrival at the "Lord Warden," where we dined and awaited the night-boat, that he had to be discharged and sent back to London there and then. Altogether—as my wife put it in the diary she kept very conscientiously at this time and during most of our sojourn in Greece—it was "a terrible day of disasters." The same ill fate pursued us to Paris, where my wife was laid up for the best part of ten days; fortunately at the very comfortable Hotel Liverpool in the Rue de Castiglione.

Our forced stay in Paris was quite devoid of incidents beyond a pleasant dinner at the Embassy, in company with the Bonhams, the young Leghs of Lyme,<sup>1</sup> and our two future successive Ambassadors at Washington, Sir Julian Pauncefote and Mungo Herbert,<sup>2</sup> and some family gatherings at the house on the Boulevard Malesherbes of Alphonse de Polignac's widow, who was remarried to a Comte Rozan. This, by the way, was one of the last opportunities I had, after a long interval, of foregathering with the eldest surviving of my Polignac cousins, Ludovic, who died only the other day (January 13, 1904) at Algiers, where he had made his principal home for many years. A retired colonel of the *Etat Major*, and an officer of conspicuous merit and great scientific attainments, he had fought, like his younger brother Camille, all through the Franco-German war, during which he served on the staff of General de Ladmirault. On the renewal of diplomatic relations after the peace he was sent as Military Attaché to the Embassy of M. de Gontaut at Berlin, where, thanks to his name and courtly *ancien régime* bearing and looks, together with his thorough command of German, he soon achieved great popularity, and enjoyed the special favour of the old Emperor William. His recollections of that period, if he has left any record of them, ought to be highly interesting.

We pursued our journey Eastwards on the 28th, with a day's break at Turin, where we put up at the Hotel de l'Europe (formerly Trombetta) on the Piazza Castello, the very same caravansary where I had landed—then but a raw, new-fledged Attaché—in November 1849, over thirty-five years before. The

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord and Lady Newton.

<sup>2</sup> The late Right Honourable Sir Michael Herbert, G.C.B.

best part of our day was spent with our former Stockholm colleagues, the Spinolas, who had an old, rambling family Palazzo at Porta d'Italia, and whom we were to meet again at The Hague some years later. I found the discrowned Piedmontese capital immensely changed since the days of my youth. It had quite lost its former distinct type of a medium-sized Court residence, with a dignified historical past that was well expressed by its formal, somewhat somnolent aspect. Its ancient stateliness and repose were now merged in the bustle and activity of a greatly enlarged commercial and industrial centre. The town had spread in all directions, and even in the older districts so much of it had been pulled down and rebuilt, that I had much difficulty in retracing some of my best-remembered haunts, and went about with the feeling of being an utter stranger, or as it were a ghost of the past, in a city every stone of which had formerly been so familiar to me. In my eyes certainly all charm and character had departed from the place I had known and loved so well in the glamour of my first burst into the pomps and vanities of diplomatic life.

We went on to Brindisi by the crowded, sluggish, ill-appointed night-mail of those days, having to turn out and change at Bologna at three in the morning. (Query: Why is it that travelling by rail through the glorious land of an eminently kindly, intelligent people is often made so singularly unpleasant by worn-out or insufficient rolling-stock and bad management, and by the too frequent want of civility of the Italian railway staff—not to touch upon other far graver drawbacks?) Anyhow the journey to Brindisi seemed to us endless and most wearisome—even though for the greater part of the day we skirted the lovely Adriatic seaboard—

and it was not until long after midnight that we were settled on board the small Greek steamer bound for Corfu. I had intended going on thence direct to the Piræus by the next boat, but, hearing that the King was expected almost immediately, I determined to await his Majesty's return to Corfu, and took up my quarters at the Hotel St. George—now thoroughly renovated and improved since I first knew it in 1864 when we gave up our protectorate over the Islands in favour of Greece. His Majesty's customary Easter-tide stay in his Ionian dominions had been interrupted by the Ministerial crisis following upon the general elections that had proved so unfavourable to the Administration of M. Tricoupis, and which had led to that statesman's resignation.

A day or two later the King arrived, just in time for the feast of St. George, and his Majesty drove in with the Queen from the country to attend the service at the garrison church in the fortress. I went out on to the esplanade to see them pass, and was gratified when the King at once recognised me and greeted me cordially with a wave of the hand. I had of course immediately applied for an audience through the *Maréchal de la Cour*, Admiral Sahini. That dignitary, however, having to go with the Queen in the Royal Yacht to Trieste to meet H.M.'s brother the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch, the matter of my audience had escaped his attention. I therefore had to renew my application through the Aide-de-Camp in waiting, when the King at once graciously sent word that he would see me the next day at luncheon at his country villa of Monrepos, built by Sir Frederick Adam, and formerly the summer residence of our Lord High Commissioners during the British occupation of Corfu. Nothing could be kinder or more cordial than

the welcome which his Majesty was pleased to give me at this strictly informal private interview. At luncheon there was no one present but the young Princes and Princesses, with their tutor and their French and English governesses, Mlle. Hinal and Miss Boyd. The King afterwards took me to his study, where he talked with me for a long time on every kind of subject, beginning with our common recollections of his first visit to these Islands, when I had accompanied him as *Chargé d'Affaires* and had been in daily intercourse with him for several weeks, as I have narrated elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

King George had now entered on his fortieth year. The ingenuous youth of eighteen had, since I parted from him, weathered some twenty-two years of a chequered reign, during which he may well have lost a good many of the hopes and illusions that gilded its outset. Though still in the very prime of life, he had matured into a monarch of many and not always satisfactory experiences. He in part perhaps owed the remarkable insight he had acquired into men and things to disenchanting though unavoidable contact with party leaders whose keen intellects were too often bent on personal aims. Himself a thoroughly conscientious and patriotic ruler, he had sometimes been obliged by the exigencies of the hour to turn for advice to politicians of a very different type. H.M. had none the less steered his course with great tact and ability through many difficulties and disappointments. It so happened that shortly before my arrival both he and Greece had lost, in M. Coumoundouros, a statesman of great experience and capacity, and that they were now deprived, by the chances of a general election, of the services of by far the ablest and most high-minded of Greek Premiers,

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. ii.

Charilaos Tricoupis, a man fitted for a much bigger stage than that to which his exceptional talents and energies were confined. To his largeness of conception, in fact; to a generous tendency to view and attempt things on a grand scale—partly arising out of a liberal English education,<sup>1</sup> but mostly inspired by the noble and genuine faith he nourished in the destinies of the Greek people—M. Tricoupis chiefly owed the crushing defeat he had just experienced.

The King was of course full of the recent crisis, and spoke of it with real concern. He was of opinion that M. Tricoupis had brought about his own downfall—and a very rough one it was—by an almost reckless disregard of public sentiment. He had been repeatedly warned of the danger of too largely increasing the public burdens, and thereby preparing serious financial embarrassments for the country. Nevertheless, he had persisted in attempting to compass too much in too short a time, with the result that the nation had just unmistakably shown its thorough disapproval of his policy. It was now to be feared that the late Ministry might be impeached by the hostile majority which had placed M. Delyannis in power in its stead. Impeachment was a weapon that had been used by the new Premier on former occasions, and it would be surprising if it were not resorted to again. Passing to other topics, King George did not omit to touch upon the threatening aspect of affairs in Central Asia. Personally he did not anticipate that Russia would push matters so far as to bring about a conflict, the issue of which might possibly be unfavourable to her. Although

<sup>1</sup> M. Tricoupis had passed much of his youth in England, where his father had been Envoy for a good many years, and had afterwards been attached to the Greek Legation in London.

the remarks made by the King were strictly guarded, it was pretty clear that he had not lost his sympathies for the country to which his Kingdom owed the Ionian Islands, and which had been mainly instrumental in enlarging his dominions by the splendid province of Thessaly. I came away from my audience much impressed by the shrewd sense, and charmed by the frank simplicity and easy, affable address of the Sovereign to whom I had the good fortune to be accredited.

Three days later we were on our way to Athens in the good ship *Austria*, reaching the Piræus in the early morning of the 13th of May—an inauspicious date, as I have since been reminded, for entering on duties which before long were to entail the gravest responsibilities. At the Piræus we were met by my old friend, Consul Merlin, formerly Manager of the Ionian Bank at Athens, and were taken on shore with all due honours in the galley of the Captain of the Port.



## CHAPTER II

### ATHENS REVISITED, 1885

I WAS of course prepared to find the Greek capital much improved and altered since my last view of it in 1864, but was none the less surprised by its development, and the signs it showed of steady expansion and growing prosperity. The kernel of the small town of former days remained much as I remembered it. Its busiest part centred as of old round the narrow streets of Hermes and Eolus with their shabby shops and execrable pavement; a few picturesque types— Islanders with the baggiest of breeks, or swaggering fellows in fustanellas—still giving here and there a semi-oriental relief to the commonplace crowds with which they mingled. Unchanged, too, was most of the yet more primitive region round about the site of the recently excavated Agora and the Temple of the Winds, which thence went straggling up, in crooked lanes and wynds, to the first slopes of the Acropolis; a region still enduring in witness of the sad level of Eastern meanness and squalor to which the city of the violet garland had sunk under Turkish rule. But, in almost every direction beyond these narrow districts, an entirely modern town had sprung up which was intersected by spacious avenues or *boulevards*, laid out on an ambitious scale, and a not too judicious design as regards their proportions. Under the cloudless, burning Attic sky, they simply afforded long,

shadeless vistas of fierce sunlight, and in winter were too often swept by hurricanes of blinding dust.

Nevertheless, these broad thoroughfares, which ran, one above the other, in parallel lines, up to and along the rocky base of Lycabettus, were not devoid of dignity. At intervals their monotony was broken by a few really fine public buildings, among them the University and the Academy of Science and Art—the latter the work of the eminent architect Hansen, who, later on, was to erect that splendid Temple of Discord, the Parliament House at Vienna—and by various large educational institutions like the Arsa-keion, the Varvakeion, and others. Sparsely scattered about these main streets, too, were a few sumptuous private residences, as, for instance, Schliemann's somewhat pretentious "Palace of Ilion"; the beautiful house of that most munificent of Greek citizens, the late M. Syngros; and those of half-a-dozen other rich Hellenes who, unlike the great majority of their prosperous congeners of Trieste, Alexandria, London, and other important Greek centres, had returned to live in their own country instead of contenting themselves with endowing it or financing it from a distance. For, splendid though be their donations to the Fatherland, the leading members of the Greek communities abroad show but little inclination to come and reside amongst, and throw in their lot with their own people. This seems a pity, and may indeed be accounted in some degree a national misfortune. In the complete absence of any clearly defined aristocratic, or upper, class, a cultured and patriotic plutocracy would furnish a valuable reinforcement to the feeble conservative elements of the country, and might serve as a counterpoise to the clique of professional politicians and

office hunters who, from the first, have played too great a part in its destinies, and are now subjected to no check beyond the very limited powers of the Crown. Both the political and social life of Greece could not but benefit by such a remigration of her sons who, together with their riches, would bring back with them the sounder traditions and principles current in their respective Western homes.

But if it was impossible not to note with satisfaction the signs of progress and improvement which Athens evinced at first sight, personally I was at once doomed to bitter disappointment in the Legation House which was to be our home. We drove there straight from the Piræus, and to our dismay found it in a state of disrepair and neglect that was really incredible, seeing that it had only a short time before been vacated by my predecessor. I had preserved so vivid a recollection of it in the days of its tenancy by the Scarletts; of its handsome vestibule and marble staircase, and its great terrace facing the wondrous temple-crowned hill, that I had given my wife a glowing description of it. Great, therefore, was our disillusion on realising the deplorable plight it was in. There was nothing for it but to make up our minds to remain at some hotel until this state of affairs had been reported home and I had obtained the requisite authority to thoroughly repair certain parts of the house which by degrees had been allowed to get into a positively ruinous and uninhabitable condition; next to nothing having been done to keep it in proper order during the forty years or so that it had been the home of British representatives, from Sir Edmund Lyons onwards. Fortunately we found comfortable apartments at the Hotel d'Angleterre, a well-managed establishment at the corner of

the Constitution, or Palace, Square and the street of Hermes, and there we had to live for over ten months before moving into our official home.

The staff of the Legation, when I arrived, consisted for a time solely of the Second Secretary, Ernest Lyon; the First Secretary of Legation, in the person of Mr. Henry Howard,<sup>1</sup> only joining it some months later. Ernest Lyon<sup>2</sup>—whom my wife had known from his boyhood, and whose acquaintance I had first made some eight years before at his historic family home of Glamis—and his wife, a very attractive little lady, with an unusually deep-speaking voice in curious contrast with her slight, fairy-like figure, are chiefly associated in my mind with a sadly painful incident. One day, early in November, on getting back from our usual afternoon drive, I found waiting for me a telegram which, in accordance with the custom of the place, bore on its envelope the name of the station whence it had been despatched. This was "Glamis," and, being addressed to me instead of to Lyon himself, I felt certain that the message must contain unfavourable news of some kind. Little, however, was I prepared for what I read: "Tell Ernest ship wrecked, baby and nurse drowned, Hubert saved." Never before or since has it been brought home to me with such force how brutal can be the brevity of announcements by telegraph. We knew that the Lyons were expecting their two little children by long sea route in the s.s. *Sidon* (she struck on some rocks off Corunna<sup>3</sup>), and now fell

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Henry Howard, K.C.M.G., C.B., and H.M.'s Envoy at the Hague.

<sup>2</sup> The Honble. Ernest Lyon, third son of the late Earl of Strathmore.

<sup>3</sup> I am tempted to extract an account of the circumstances of the wreck from my wife's diary: "Nov. 18. The Lyons have just received from Glamis a letter, written to Lady Strathmore by a Miss Evans, who

to us the task of breaking to them this terrible catastrophe. They had taken for the hot season a small villa on the cliff at Phalerum; where we frequently went to dine and spend the evening on the verandah whence, in the perfectly lovely Attic moonlit nights, the outlook seawards and across the bay towards Hymettus and the intervening plain of Athens was quite enchanting. We drove out there at once, and my wife went in to see and prepare the unconscious mother while I paced up and down outside in the gathering dusk waiting for Lyon, who had not yet returned from his day's occupation in town. Poor Ernest Lyon! Full of intelligence, and with a most pleasant manner and much social talent, he too was destined to an early and violent end, being killed a few years later at Belgrade by a fall from his horse.

Almost my first association, however, with the

was one of the passengers on the wrecked *Sidon*. They had had very bad weather from the moment of leaving Liverpool, and on the evening of the 27th October at 7.30 P.M., the ship struck on a rock off Malpica, which is not far from Corunna. Two passengers and the head nurse and baby got into a boat which was swamped at the side of the vessel, all four being drowned. The remaining passengers were then placed on the forecastle—the communicating bridge being swept away just after the Captain, at the risk of his life, had carried Hubert over it. They then clung on to ropes until ten o'clock the next morning, washed over and threatened continually with destruction by the raging sea. Miss Evans says that the young nurse, Annie Jackson, behaved admirably. Her foot had been much crushed and injured, but she only let the child out of her arms twice, just to enable her to change her cramped position, and what that must have been may be imagined, for the ship was on her beam-ends, and the passengers could only keep themselves from being washed overboard by holding fast to the ropes. The two nurses, who had been ill all the voyage, were roused from their cots when the ship struck, and had no time to put on any clothes, so this poor Annie was in her night-gown only. In the morning boats came from the land, which proved to be so close that, when day broke, the poor wretched creatures could see people sitting on the shore under umbrellas (for it was raining) watching them."

Lyon *ménage* was of an entirely different and decidedly cheerful description; when, in beautiful weather at the end of May, they induced me to join them on a day's trip to the Acro Corinth. The German *Chargé d'Affaires*, Prince Francis Thurn and Taxis, and his extremely pretty wife—a Countess d'Orsay, of an Austrian branch of the French family to which belonged the well-known dandy of the first half of last century—were also of the party. We had a longish journey by rail there and back, and upwards of an hour's steep climb—the ladies, of course, mounted on mules—to the summit of the rocky eminence and the triple line of mediæval fortifications which, from the Latin Crusaders who erected them, passed successively into Venetian and Turkish hands. The toil of the ascent in the mid-day heat was more than repaid, for the view obtained from the top is quite surprising, not alone for its beauty and extent but for its entirely exceptional character. Greece in fact—or as much of it as enables one clearly to take in the entire configuration of the country which looms so large in the world's history and yet is territorially so small—lies stretched out before one exactly as it looks on the map.

From this fortress eyrie—rising abruptly to a height of close upon two thousand feet above the level of the isthmus, midway between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, and with an incomparable outlook over both—the horizon stretches far away to the majestic background of Parnassus and Helicon, whose masses tower above the plains of Phocis, Bœotia and Attica in Continental Greece; while in the opposite, Peloponnesian, quarter, it is bounded by the barren range that conceals Argos, and behind which, much

further to the south, the mind's eye takes in Laconia with the rugged Spartan country. In the brilliantly transparent atmosphere and the wondrous light that lend a special enchantment to Greek scenery, even when most bare and arid, the map-like prospect is so clear that it looks almost possible to place one's finger, as on the map itself, on half-a-dozen world-renowned spots—Delphi, and Leuctra, and Plataea, and Mantinea—let alone Salamis and Marathon—the latter, however, being screened from view by the ridges of Pentelicus. Every one of these sites is included in the marvellous prospect, and the whole story of ancient Greece is spread out, as it were, at one's feet. We picnicked gaily in the shade of some giant rocks just below the summit, and of all the enjoyments of this delightful day perhaps the most perfect was slaking one's thirst at an old well—the kerb and orifice of which were thickly overgrown with delicate maiden-hair fern, and which lay not far from the famed Pirenian spring—a goat-herd who was tending his flock drawing up for us a bucketful of the most delicious ice-cold water I have ever tasted.

The Greek sky and climate lend themselves so admirably to outings such as I have just described, that we subsequently went, on several occasions, with the pleasant Lyons and Taxis couples and a few other colleagues, to that favourite resort of the tourist, Pentelicus. On leaving the sun-scorched, almost treeless plain, after a hot, dusty drive, nothing can be more grateful than the verdure with which the ravines by the side of the ascent and the first acclivities of the mountain are thickly clad. Further on one presently comes to a group of splendid plane-trees, of immense age, grouped round a fresh spring of bubbling

water, and giving shelter to a sort of platform just outside the old monastery of Mendeli. There could be no more ideal setting to our midday feasts than this charming shady spot, which is of course familiar to most travellers in these regions. Nowhere do the beauties and restfulness of foliage make themselves so keenly felt as in stony Attica, and yet nowhere are an ignorant peasantry more wanton in the destruction of timber. The chief offenders in this respect are the shepherds and goat-herds who, in defiance of all forest laws, recklessly set whole plantations alight for the sake of procuring a few acres of meagre pasturage for their herds.

Only a few years after I left Greece, there occurred a most disastrous conflagration which destroyed a great part of the woods that I had seen standing on the south-western slopes of Pentelicus. Half the garrison of Athens was employed for several days in checking the progress of the flames on the burning mountain. To the laying waste of the forests which, in ancient times, probably covered much of the Attic uplands, is mainly due, no doubt, the excessive dryness of the climate and the lightness of the soil. For the resident at Athens it has this other disastrous effect, that, unlike most southern capitals, there exist in the neighbourhood of the city no shady retreats on the hill-slopes, where one can take refuge from the oppressive summer heat. Athens, in fact, is almost unprovided with *villeggiaturas*, if one excepts the glaring sea-side resort of Phalerum, and Kephisia with its few gardens and, at that time, very second-rate hotel.<sup>1</sup> In the earlier

<sup>1</sup> Kephisia, the guide-books remind us, was in ancient times a favourite resort of the citizens of Athens, and is praised in the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius. It may of late years have been living up to its former reputation, but in my recollection it is a hot, uninteresting place, with little to recommend it.



days of King Otho it was not so. Some villas were built on Pentelicus, chiefly at the initiative of that eccentric Philhellene Frenchwoman, the Duchesse de Plaisance, who then played a prominent part in Athens society, at the same time as her friend and intimate, the beautiful Ianthe,<sup>1</sup> whose chequered matrimonial and other adventures brought her to Greece before she finally ended her wayward existence under the tent of the Bedouin Sheikh Mijwal of Damascus. Strolling about in the neighbourhood of the monastery on one of our excursions, I found myself almost unawares inside a broken-down fence enclosing a neglected old pleasure-ground, half garden and half orchard, which the rank growth of vegetation had turned into a pathless jungle. Through the great flowering shrubs and towering brambles there peered out the pink marble walls of the deserted, only half-finished villa built by the strangely capricious, and romantic Duchess,<sup>2</sup> where, in the bright garden, with its distant view of the Ægean waters, at the first dawn of the newly-created kingdom, many a dream may have been dreamt, and many a plan discussed for the recovery of Byzantium. Why these perfect sites for summer retreats should have been afterwards completely abandoned, I never heard satisfactorily explained. Possibly, in addition to the devastation of the woods, the insecurity of the country due to the plague of brigandage may account for it. As late as 1870, only a few miles from here, took place the capture by brigands of the victims of the shocking massacre of Oropos.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Ellenborough.

<sup>2</sup> One of the singularities of this daughter-in-law of the Napoleonic *Archichancelier* Lebrun, Duc de Plaisance, was to build houses of fantastic architectural design which she never completed, from a superstitious dread that she would die as soon as she had put the last touch to them. See E. About's *Grèce contemporaine* for her and Ianthe.

On his return from Corfu at the end of May, the King opened the newly-elected Chamber in person. In the speech from the throne reference was made to Balkanic affairs in terms to which events that were to follow soon gave a special significance. It was both "the duty and the interest of Greece," it was said in the speech, "to desire the maintenance of the territorial *status quo*, established some years before at Berlin." Peace, it was added, with a passing allusion to the national aspirations, would best enable the country to effect those internal improvements which it still needed, "and thereby render itself worthy of its mission." On the whole—making allowance for this slight touch of Panhellenism—the language put in his Sovereign's mouth by the new Prime Minister was fairly correct and satisfactory. For the rest, the ceremony was attended with little outward display beyond the lining by troops of the road along which the Royal carriages passed from the palace to the House of Parliament. From our rooms at the hotel, overlooking the Palace Square, we had an excellent view of the military pageant such as it was. A battery of artillery was drawn up right under our windows, but the only really picturesque item of the show was a battalion of *Evzones*, or Riflemen, clad in the national, or rather the Albanian, dress, with the *fustanella*, or white kilt. Wonderfully smart, active, soldier-like fellows, and held to be the flower of the Greek army, though by their extraordinarily slender waists, and starched full-pleated white petticoats, they irresistibly reminded one of a *corps de ballet*.

On the evening before the opening of the Chamber I had had my official audience of the King, for the delivery of my credentials, and had been afterwards

received by Queen Olga, whom I now saw for the first time. The Queen, then barely thirty-four years of age, was, like most of the grandchildren of the Emperor Nicholas, strikingly handsome, and had besides inherited much of the good looks of her mother, the Grand Duchess Constantine, one of the most beautiful women of her day. Although brought up in the most splendid and luxurious of Courts, no princess of a great reigning house ever led a saintlier life of perfect self-denial and charity than Queen Olga. Her days were almost entirely given up to good works. The "Queen of the poor," as she had been affectionately proclaimed by the public voice, personally looked after the various hospitals and other charitable institutions on which she bestowed her patronage. Scarcely a day passed without her visiting the *Evangelismos*—which, under her care and supervision, had become a hospital worthy of any great Western capital—and she was deeply interested in the needle-work institution she had founded for the employment of women, and for which so much has been done in recent years by Lady Egerton. The Queen received me most graciously, and captivated me by her simple charm and dignity. Her Majesty kindly inquired after my wife, whose health, I explained to her, had thus far prevented her applying for an audience. When this indispensable form had been gone through, we were at once, on the 8th of June, asked to luncheon—or more properly early dinner—together with the Lyons, at the Royal country place at Tatoï.

This favourite residence of King George—entirely his own creation—lies about eighteen miles to the north of Athens, on one of the lower spurs of Parnes. The first part of the road to it is of an uninteresting character, and at that time of the year we found the drive extremely hot and dusty. Beyond a certain

point, however, the ground gradually rises and is covered with fir-trees, the road itself being planted on each side with the beautiful oleanders which grow so luxuriantly all over Greece. On entering the Royal domain the trees become more varied and are more thickly planted, and one soon finds oneself driving through prettily laid-out and well-kept grounds. The house, which is scarcely visible till one is close upon it, is but a villa of moderate size, affording just sufficient accommodation for the Royal family. The gentlemen of the suite in fact were at that time lodged in rooms above the stables and coach-houses.<sup>1</sup> We were taken to one of these rooms to shake off the dust of the road, and when we came down were met in the grounds by the King himself, to whom I presented my wife; his Majesty then showing us the way through the gardens to the house, where the *Grande Maîtresse* (Mistress of the Robes), Mme. Theocaris, took charge of Lady Rumbold and conducted her to the Queen's apartments. I will borrow here some details from my wife's diary:—

"We were to have dined *al fresco*, as is the pleasant custom here, but the clouds which had all the morning shaded the sun, now burst, and a violent thunderstorm, with heavy rain, necessitated the transfer to the house of all the dinner arrangements; this being accomplished by the servants—some of them rather fat Palikares in the Albanian dress—in their shirt-sleeves, quite heedless of the passing to and fro of their Royal masters and their guests. At about 3.30 dinner was served in the dining-room, where we were rather closely packed. The party besides ourselves was only

<sup>1</sup> This description applies to the villa first erected on the estate, and in no way to the present spacious Royal *château* of Dekeleia, which was only entirely finished shortly before I left Athens in 1888.

a family one, including governesses and professors—the latter coming out from Athens two or three times a week to the Princes; in all about sixteen people. The dinner was good and not too long, and the table decoration of the simplest, the only ornament being a bouquet of flowers.

“H. and I sat on the left respectively of their Majesties, and the Crown Prince and his sister on the right. On my left was Prince Nicholas, a charming, bright boy of thirteen, full of talk, and very keen to hear all I could tell him about English boys and their ways. Conversation was easy and pretty general, and when the subject of ghosts incidentally cropped up, the presence of the Lyons naturally led to the mention of the mysteries and legends of Glamis Castle, which were discussed with the greatest interest, as is indeed always the case in any society.

“The storm was sharp but short, and after dinner we were able to go out and admire the gardens, which their Majesties showed us with an evident and justifiable pride in their own work. Their work it really is, for when they took it in hand twelve years ago, Tatoi was little better than a bare, uncultivated hill-side. It is difficult to realise, when wandering about this green and luxuriantly shaded retreat, that one is within a two hours' drive of sun-scorched, treeless Athens. (Shade of the Olive groves, forgive me! You are so grey and dusty that you don't count.)

“The new building is in progress and will probably be finished by next summer. It is not a palace, but a well-planned, solid, stone house with a fine terrace, from which there is a magnificent view right away to the sea, including Athens and the Acropolis. Their Majesties took much trouble in explaining to us the details and arrangements of the house, letting appear,

in all they did and said, a simple, unaffected interest in their new abode, such as might have been shown by any ordinary country gentleman and his wife.

“Having exhausted the sights of the garden, we were taken for a drive through the very fine oak woods, again all planned by the King and his Danish bailiff. The King drove H. in his phaeton, while I and the Lyons were with the Queen, the Royal children following in another carriage. On the way back we visited the stables, farm-buildings, &c., and their occupants, among them being a dear little baby donkey, which was evidently on the best and most affectionate of terms with the whole Royal family.

“On again reaching Tatoï we found our own carriages ready (7.30 P.M.). The Queen took leave of us at the foot of the steps, and retired, while the King and the children waited to see us off.

“It was a fatiguing day, but I shall soon forget that, and only remember its being a very pleasant one, passed in the society of this most charming and amiable Royal family.”

### CHAPTER III

#### ATHENS, 1885—THE REVOLUTION AT PHILIPPOLIS

THE summer wore away, and with it the well-nigh intolerable heat. In our rooms, most of which looked on to the narrow street of Hermes, it was almost as trying by night as by day. The only approach to relief from it was during our late afternoon drives to the beach at Phalerum, whence we used to return after dusk, when the lamps in the mean, populous suburb on the way to the Piræus were just being lighted, and at the street corners one heard, through the stifling haze, the clear tinkle of ice in the revolving machines of the vendors of lemonade and other cooling drinks—a deliciously refreshing sound which remains associated in my memory with the purgatory we underwent during these endless Athenian dog-days.

Contrary to all expectation, the first session of the new Legislature, although sufficiently stormy, passed off without any attempt on the part of the incoming Ministry actually to impeach their predecessors. The Government candidate for the Presidency was duly elected in the person of M. Kalliphronas, a very old Parliamentary stager who had sat in every Legislature for the last forty years. M. Kalliphronas was quite a survival of Edmond About's *Grèce contemporaine*, and one of the few Greeks, of any standing, who still clung to the national dress. I remembered the picturesque old gentleman twenty years before as a

deputy for Attica, where he was a considerable landowner. The story told of him then was that he had come to a friendly understanding with the brigand chief, Kitzos, at that time the scourge of the country. When pressed too hard by the Gendarmerie, Kitzos, it was said, was sure of a refuge in M. Kalliphronas' house at Athens; that gentleman's property and tenants being in return exempted from the chieftain's operations. At that period M. Kalliphronas held the portfolio of Justice in the Provisional Government of the day.

M. Tricoupis' financial administration did not, of course, escape violent, and in some measure well-merited attack in the Chamber. He had left the Treasury in such a state of depletion that scarcely one-third of the funds required to meet the July coupon of the Foreign Debt was available at the end of May. The heavy outlay incurred for so-called productive purposes, such as the extension of the railways and the making of new roads—though both these were undeniably much needed—had been far in excess of the normal resources of a country further burdened with a military and naval expenditure quite out of proportion to its reasonable requirements. That the late Prime Minister had been actuated in his financial policy by any but the purest patriotic motives could not be questioned. None the less he had brought Greece to a condition bordering on bankruptcy. Heated discussions took place about the Budget brought in by M. Delyannis, which was a complete overthrow of the economic system initiated by the preceding Government. Similar ruthless reversals of policy have been seen elsewhere, but, in this instance, the programme of M. Delyannis could be summed up as a systematic undoing of everything



attempted by his predecessor. The entire fabric of fiscal legislation and administrative reform, patiently reared by the late Premier during his three years' tenure of office, was destroyed in as many weeks; the Chamber getting through the various stages of the numerous Bills laid before it, at the rate of from twenty to thirty in a single sitting, and the Budget itself being disposed of in two days. Hard words probably break fewer bones in Greece than elsewhere, but the virulence of the onslaught made upon M. Tricoupis and his policy was no doubt proportionate to the exceptional duration of his Administration.

The fallen statesman showed an undaunted front to his adversaries. On the occasion of an attempt made by the Governmental majority to invalidate the election of one of the deputies for Missolonghi who was a supporter of his, he challenged the Chamber, in a speech of great vigour, to annul his own election for the same constituency. If they annulled the election of his colleague alone, he would forthwith, he said, resign his own seat, for he would never consent to be indebted for it to his position as Leader of the Opposition. Whatever charges were brought against the election of his friend, applied equally to his own. Let them, therefore, have the courage to strike the man at whom the blow was really aimed, by declaring the entire election void and expelling him.

The lamentable condition of the national finances had the effect of bringing public opinion face to face with the unpalatable truth that the only effectual means of righting the country economically was a reduction of its excessive armaments. A movement in this sense was indeed observable in part of the

public press, though it was difficult to say whether it reached to any great depth. In the Chamber M. Tricoupis at once grappled with this question with characteristic boldness and much skill. If, he said, a saving of Fifteen Million Drachmai could be effected in the Estimates, the problem of achieving an equilibrium in the Budget would at once be solved. Such a result, however, could only be attained by giving up those military preparations to which he had himself so much contributed. Nothing would induce him to consent to such a step, which must bring with it the relinquishment of the national aspirations or, as he preferred to put it, the national policy of Greece. Greece, he maintained, could not be made ready too rapidly to take her part in the inevitable—to his mind the immediately impending—struggle in the East. Whatever the cost of such preparations, it was far better it should be incurred than that the country should be found powerless to assert itself at the proper time. He dared the Government to follow any other line. He knew that public opinion of all shades was unanimous on this one point of upholding the national policy. It was clear that even the actual Ministry shared these views, since they had only tinkered at the Military Estimates with a few economies, but had practically left them untouched.

I have quoted from M. Tricoupis' speech at great length because of the unfortunate influence which his attitude in this question had on the course of the untoward events that were soon to follow. Equally regrettable in its tendencies was the charge he brought against M. Delyannis of having cut down an item figuring in the Estimates of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs under the head of "Unforeseen

Expenses," and which was devoted to fostering Greek schools and Greek literature in the Turkish provinces. The sum—some 800,000 Drachmai—set apart for this object, was disbursed through a Syllogos, or Committee, which had its seat at Athens, and, no account being rendered of its expenditure, was practically a secret service fund applied to the propagation of Panhellenic ideas and aspirations. M. Delyannis made but a feeble defence against what was in the eyes of every patriotic Greek a most damaging imputation, and in fact allowed himself to be brow-beaten by his masterful antagonist. Passion on both sides of the Chamber rose to such a pitch during the debate that at one moment it came to a free fight with fists and sticks. Fortunately a thermometer registering over 100 degrees in the shade, and the approaching currant harvest, shortly afterwards combined to bring the session to a desirable close.

Among the efforts at retrenchment made by the new Administration was the recall of the Greek Envoys at Foreign Courts, and the substitution for them of simple *Chargés d'Affaires* with greatly reduced salaries. The candidate for the vacancy in London was M. Gennadius, an old acquaintance of mine, who had lived a great many years in England, had been Secretary to the Legation there, and not only spoke, but wrote English more perfectly than almost any other foreigner I have ever known. M. Gennadius was at Athens, and, when consulted about his appointment by M. Delyannis, I strongly backed him as extremely well suited for a post which he before long filled with much distinction.

In another instance the new Premier who had

taken charge of the Foreign Department, was not so well inspired. The Greek Legation at Berlin had been held for a good many years by M. Rhangabé, one of the most distinguished Hellenes of his time.<sup>1</sup> M. Rhangabé was a man of great erudition, a brilliant writer and dramatist, and a charming poet, who stood in high favour not only with the Emperor William and the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, but with Prince Bismarck himself. On his being recalled, in accordance with the scheme for the reduction of diplomatic expenditure, the German *Chargé d'Affaires*, Prince Taxis, was instructed to make an urgent unofficial representation, in the name of the Emperor, for the maintenance of the Greek Minister at his post. The action thus taken was undoubtedly of an unusual character, but M. Delyannis was so ill advised as to intimate his inability to comply with the request in language which at Berlin was looked upon as conveying a discourteous rebuff. He had not counted, however, with the imperious Chancellor, who not only returned to the charge, in almost peremptory terms, but took the quite unprecedented course of getting the Austrian and Russian Governments to support his request diplomatically at Athens. *L'Affaire Rhangabé*, in fact, attained quite serious proportions, and certainly not a little contributed to the very hostile attitude towards M. Delyannis personally, which was taken up by Prince Bismarck in the serious crisis that ensued a few months later.

The simple, unassuming object of this sharp diplo-

<sup>1</sup> Alexander-Rizos Rhangabé (b. 1810, d. 1892) had been Envoy at Washington and Constantinople and at one time Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had represented Greece at the Congress of Berlin. Apart from his diplomatic and literary labours, he had acquired distinction as an archæologist in the excavation of the ruins of the Temple of Juno at Argos.

matic interlude was too interesting a personality to be passed over without further notice in these Recollections. M. Rhangabé, who must then have been considerably past seventy, was a diminutive and fragile-looking old gentleman, with a charming, mobile countenance, and a splendid intellectual forehead crowned with a long, carelessly-brushed silver mane. His talk was most interesting and his manner was full of an almost boyish vivacity which made it easy to understand his being a favourite with so admirable a judge of intellect and genius as the late Empress Frederick. We saw a good deal of this fascinating old diplomatist,<sup>1</sup> who had taken rooms in a house in Hermes Street almost exactly facing our windows, and in the sultry summer evenings it was amusing to watch the balcony opposite where he and the handsome, rather showy, Miss Rhangabés held their small court of friends and admirers.

The Chamber now adjourned until October, and the King started on his annual journey abroad, first going to Vienna, and thence to visit his relatives at Gmunden and at Copenhagen. Shortly before his Majesty left an incident occurred which well illustrated the abnormal position of the Crown in Greece, and, in some degree, foreshadowed the difficult situation that not long after arose between it and its responsible advisers. Among the few intimates of the Royal circle was the King's favourite aide-de-camp Colonel Hadjipetros, who always accompanied his Majesty on his travels, and filled the functions of what at German Courts is known as a *Reisemarschall*. The Colonel was a bluff, outspoken soldier, thoroughly devoted to his master, and, although taking no active

<sup>1</sup> A son of M. Rhangabé is now, I believe, Greek Minister at Berlin.

part in politics, an admirer of the late Prime Minister M. Tricoupis. Some incautious remark he allowed to drop at the time of the Ministerial crisis in February, as to his belief that the King would certainly not grant M. Delyannis power to dissolve the Chamber, reached the ears of the new Premier, who thereupon pressed his Majesty to dismiss his aide-de-camp in sign of his confidence in his new advisers. On the King's demurring to this request, M. Delyannis threatened to resign if the obnoxious officer were not at once removed. Under what was very improper pressure, the King thought it well to acquiesce, and it was officially announced, on the very eve of his Majesty's departure, that Colonel Hadjipetros had ceased to hold his Court appointment and was placed at the disposal of the Minister of War.

The removal of the Colonel was stated to be technically correct, inasmuch as the army regulations did not allow of any officer being taken for more than three years from the corps to which he belonged, and the aide-de-camp had long exceeded that limit. But of this petty display of power on the part of M. Delyannis there could be no two opinions. The affair, besides being the general talk of the town, caused much indignation among the Foreign Diplomats, who were all agreed in blaming the conduct of the Greek Premier. Shortly afterwards, at one of my frequent interviews with him, M. Delyannis, to my great surprise, spoke to me of the incident. The explanation which he volunteered of it was that he had been compelled to insist on M. Hadjipetros' dismissal because his supporters in the Chamber threatened to desert him if he did not obtain it.

I thereupon told the Minister that, since he himself alluded to a subject which I should certainly

not have broached to him, I would tell him, in as friendly a manner as I could, what I thought of it. I did not, I said, presume to judge whether he had had what he considered sufficient reasons for acting as he had done. I could not, however, conceal from him that what had occurred had produced a very unfortunate impression on me and on all my colleagues. We regretted that such undue pressure should have been brought to bear upon the King. It must be borne in mind, I said, that under the Greek Constitution<sup>1</sup> the Crown was singularly powerless, and for that reason any proceeding that infringed upon the Royal dignity seemed to me, to say the least, imprudent. Yet it was hardly to be supposed that Greece could exist without a monarchy. I had myself been a witness of the interregnum between King Otho and King George, and knew what that had been like. Monarchy being, therefore, a necessity for Greece, she might deem herself fortunate in having a King who commanded the sympathies of Europe. Since he had started the subject I was glad of the opportunity of frankly speaking my mind about it, and I must add that, as the representative of the Power which had done most to place the King upon the Throne, and had on two occasions taken the lead in greatly increasing his dominions, I should at all times, while carefully avoiding immixing myself in internal politics, consider it my special duty to support his Majesty. I will do M. Delyannis the justice to say that he took what I said in good part, and thought it right to assure me of his devotion to his Sovereign.

With the Royal departure and the Parliamentary

<sup>1</sup> See "Recollections of a Diplomatist," pp. 125 and 126, as to the acquiescence of our Government in this very faulty Constitution.

recess, an absolutely dead season, both politically and socially, came over Athens sweltering in the heat and dust. But for the works at last begun on the Legation House, to which, together with a sixteen years' lease of it, Lord Salisbury had got the Treasury to agree, there would have been nothing to interest or occupy us. All of a sudden, at the end of September, the startling turn of events in Eastern Roumelia woke up Greece with a vengeance out of her summer siesta, and threw her into one of those wild fever-dreams of conquest and aggrandisement which have periodically marked her troubled history since her first struggle for freedom and independence.

Eastern Roumelia—a creation of the Congress of Berlin—had been given a semi-independent existence as a vassal province of the Ottoman Empire, and was feebly administered by a Phanariot Pasha of the name of Krestovitch. During the summer, Philippopolis had already been the scene of serious disturbances between the Slav and Greek elements of the population, in the course of which, the former being unduly favoured by the Ottoman authorities, many recriminations had been exchanged between Athens and Constantinople. The sudden, bloodless revolution of the 18th September—when the Turkish Governor-General was seized in his Konak and expelled, and Prince Alexander of Battenberg proclaimed ruler of a greater, united Bulgaria—was so defiant a violation of the arrangements sanctioned by all the Great Powers at Berlin that it could not but produce a profound impression at Athens. Not only did it constitute a flagrant infraction of the *status quo* in the Balkans which the King, in opening the Chamber, had declared it to be the duty and the interest of Greece to respect and



uphold, but it was a signal triumph for the rival Slav in whom, far more than in their ancient oppressor the Turk, the Hellenes had long come to see their most dangerous enemy.

At first, nevertheless, I was able to report home that, beyond a certain degree of effervescence at Athens and in some of the provincial towns, there were no signs of undue excitement. As for the Government, they were of course much disturbed, and all the more so that, only a few days before, they had received advices from Vienna to the effect that peace was now more than ever assured; nothing, therefore, they had hoped, standing in the way of their devoting all their attention to purely internal concerns. Unfortunately, the Opposition press at once set to work to increase the ferment by clamouring for the calling out of the reserves, and when news arrived of a mobilisation having been ordered in Servia, even the Greek Foreign Office, though at first professing a sincere desire to keep the country quiet, began to admit that some active steps might become necessary for the protection of Hellenic interests at so grave a crisis.

The return of the King was now anxiously awaited. His Majesty reached Athens on Sunday, the 27th of September, having stopped on his way back at Vienna. With the rest of the Diplomatic Body I went to receive the Royal traveller at the Corinth Railway station. The streets were thronged with holiday folk, together with various corporations and patriotic associations which, when the King drove by, cheered enthusiastically, and, forming into procession with their banners, marched to the Palace square where the bulk of them gradually dispersed. An obstreperous mob, however, chiefly composed of

Thracians and Macedonians, continued shouting under the Palace windows until the King came out on the balcony with the Queen and the Royal children, and said a few words to them, exhorting them to patience and fortitude in the serious circumstances which had arisen, and bidding them rely on his unceasing care for the interests of Hellenism.

It soon became evident that the Government were being swept along by the fast-rising tide, for before the end of the week two classes of the reserve—some 12,000 men—were called out by Royal decree. I had prepared Lord Salisbury<sup>1</sup> for this turn of affairs, and had asked for definite instructions for my guidance, giving it as my opinion, and that of most of my colleagues, that M. Delyannis' Administration was much too feeble to arrest the movement which had set in for a vindication by force of arms, if necessary, of the claims of Greece to her share in what was then believed to be the impending final break-up of the Turkish Empire. In reply, I was commissioned to deliver a friendly but earnest remonstrance from Her Majesty's Government against the course that was being followed in Greece, coupled with the warning that that country would only be laying itself open to humiliation and disaster if it persevered in it.

I found M. Delyannis very obdurate. He maintained that, although certain military measures were being taken with a view to meeting possible eventualities, it could not be said that Greece was bent upon war, since she had no immediate tangible adversary. In the event, however, he added, of the unity of Bulgaria under Prince Alexander becoming an accomplished fact recognised by the Powers, or of the *status quo*

<sup>1</sup> A Conservative Government had come into office at the end of June.

in Macedonia being in any way infringed, he could bind himself to nothing. After assuming this high tone at first, he nevertheless presently let me perceive what was the drift of his policy by insinuating that, inasmuch as the events which had taken place must, if ratified, entirely displace the equilibrium contemplated by the Treaty of Berlin, Greece might justly pretend to some territorial compensation, such as would be afforded for instance by the frontier which she had in vain claimed at the Congress.

I strongly cautioned M. Delyannis against entertaining any hopes of that description. At the same time I felt, as I reported home, that he was being swayed in this crisis much more by the internal than by the external difficulties of the situation. He had not been strong enough to oppose at the outset a firm resistance to the clamour raised against him by his political adversaries, backed by the Macedonian and other semi-revolutionary committees, on the score of his inaction and apparent disregard of the interests of Hellenism.\* At first he had humoured the movement without exactly lending himself to it, in the hope that the action of Turkey or the intervention of the Powers might restore matters in the Balkans to their former condition. This hope proving vain, and the excitement in Greece daily increasing, he and his colleagues had resolved to turn events to account for their own purposes. They had now practically placed themselves at the head of the movement, and, as far as could be judged, had embarked on a policy of adventure. They had thereby acquired for the time a fictitious strength and popularity, and, what was of much greater concern to them, had relieved themselves of the irksome obligation of endeavouring to restore some order in the finances of the country.

Their desperate financial position had, in fact, contributed to make them reckless, and the alternative that presented itself to their minds was probably either bankruptcy or an accession of territory. What they left entirely out of account was that the latter would by no means stave off the former. As I said to the Prime Minister, it seemed to me almost folly that he should talk of the necessity of incurring the expense of mobilisation in the very same room where, all through the summer, he had poured out to me his lamentations over the terrible straits in which he had been left by his predecessor.

## CHAPTER IV

### ATHENS, 1885—WAR FEVER AND MOBILISATION

MEANTIME the warlike movement rapidly gained strength. The Chamber was convoked in extraordinary session, and money was raised by loans obtained from the National Bank of Greece and two other smaller Banks, in exchange for the privilege granted to them of forced currency for their Notes. By these means the Government at once secured the command of something like £1,200,000, which was supplemented afterwards by a further advance from the National Bank. Finally, on the 12th of October, a decree was issued calling up three more classes of the reserve and mobilising all the military and naval forces of the Kingdom. The Minister of Marine, M. Roma, who disapproved the adventurous policy of the Premier and seceded from the Cabinet at this juncture, told me that it was intended to place at least 100,000 men in the field.

We now began to experience the effects of these measures at Athens. Large bodies of men poured into the capital from every part of the Kingdom and made the streets hideous both day and night by their vociferations and shouts of "*Zito polemos!*" (Long live war!). After dark, these continuous processions with banners and discordant bands of music, derived an almost sinister character from the torches and red Bengal lights that accompanied them. Seen and heard from a distance, as they threaded the narrow streets,

the hoarse cries of the marching masses, the lurid reflection on the white walls of the houses, and the smoke and glare of the torches suggested riot and arson, and every excess of mob law. In reality these poor peasants and labourers, taken from their hearths and homes, where many of them were the only bread-winners, were harmless and inoffensive enough, though some of the contingents from the interior of the Peloponnesus—mountaineers of splendid physique—certainly looked very ugly customers. No proper provision having been made for them on their arrival in Athens, and the quarters assigned to them being quite inadequate, they in some instances invaded the smaller inns and eating-houses of the town and committed a few excesses. But much the greater number of them uncomplainingly lay out in the open in the chilly October nights which gave but a faint foretaste of the hardships that awaited them all through the following weary winter on the bleak uplands of Thessaly.

An attempt which was made to billet the reservists on residents of the better class was the occasion of my renewing acquaintance with George Finlay's widow, in whose favour I interfered successfully and got her relieved of her unwelcome garrison. We went to see her in the old house where the historian had died ten years before, which she kept in perfect order, and in which she evidently took much pride. This last link with Byronic days—a quaint, ancient Levantine dame, very neatly attired in black silk and velvet, with a smart little black-and-gold Greek jacket, and wearing a funny and all-too-palpable wig—was much gratified by our visit, and profuse in her thanks for the small service I had been able to do her.

In the opinion of the most competent judges

nothing could be more disastrous than the military measures to which the Government had committed themselves. General Vosseur, a French officer of distinction whom M. Tricoupis had engaged some years before to reorganise the Greek army, and place it on a small working footing, made no concealment of his dismay. It might have been useful and politic, he said, to call up the first reserves as an earnest to the country and to the Powers that the Government were resolved to guard the interests of Greece; but the decree of mobilisation (which had been issued without his being in any way consulted) was in his view quite indefensible. There existed no provision whatever for clothing or equipping this mass of men or turning them into anything like soldiers. There was further this most dangerous side to the step which had been taken that on two occasions already (in 1877 and 1880) the reserves had been needlessly summoned, so that in joining the colours now they would probably do so with the determination not to be baulked again.<sup>1</sup> General Vosseur spoke of these raw levies as being quite incapable of any serious effort in the field; they were "*des hommes avec des fusils et voilà tout.*"

The ex-Garibaldian General Türr, who was at Athens on business connected with the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth, held exactly the same views about the mobilisation, and complained at the same time of his undertaking being practically stopped for lack of hands. In a variety of small ways we ourselves felt the discomforts occasioned by this removal of such a large proportion of the male population from their

<sup>1</sup> In the event these fears proved groundless. The withdrawal from the Turkish frontier and the general disarmament were acquiesced in without any trouble by the reservists, who showed a very creditable and orderly spirit.

avocations. The Athens tradespeople were unable to supply customers punctually, on account of the loss of many of their assistants. Much more serious in such a climate was the insufficiency of the supply of ice, nearly all the ice-making factories being closed for want of workmen; while half of our staff of inn-waiters were enrolled and taken from their duties. In a small country with limited resources, like Greece, the strain of this state of things made itself felt very keenly, and the game of bluff—for it was little else—to which it was due, became quite exasperating. M. Rhangabé who, to his great joy, had been reinstated in his post at Berlin, came to say good-bye to us about this time. He told my wife that he had a son with the troops in Thessaly, but had managed to get him back to Athens. She replied, in fun, that it was depriving him of a chance of glory. “*Non*,” replied Rhangabé, “*ce n’est pas le danger que je crains pour lui, c’est le ridicule!*” And, with this valedictory shaft at the policy of his Government, the evergreen old Envoy took his leave, and bundled down the steep hotel stairs, on his very shaky little legs, at a pace that was quite alarming.

Meanwhile the Powers, in their very sincere desire to prevent the spread of the existing complications in the Balkans, lost no time in endeavouring to arrest the action of the Greek Government. About the date of the King’s return from abroad, Prince Bismarck, whose sentiments towards M. Delyannis, as I have already explained, were far from cordial, proposed through the Ambassador in London, Count Münster, that effective pressure should be brought to bear by means of a naval demonstration of the Powers at the Piræus. This proposal was abandoned, partly on account of un-



willingness on the part of the French Foreign Minister, M. Waddington, to join in it. Shortly afterwards the German Envoy, Baron de Brincken, on his return from leave, was instructed to suggest some combined diplomatic action for the same purpose. This led to a *démarche collective*, when the Ministers of the six Powers—Italy, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Russia, and Great Britain—waited upon M. Delyannis by appointment, and each in turn warned him of the dangers of the course on which he was engaged, impressing upon him the thorough disapproval with which it was viewed by their respective Governments. In the discussions with my colleagues which preceded this step I had urged that a written identic or collective Note would carry more weight than our verbal expostulations, but had been overruled. Our interview with the Greek Premier, who looked downcast and ill at ease, produced upon me, I confess, the not very dignified impression that we were, so to speak, the ushers of Dame Europa's school having up before them the last offender reported for misbehaviour, and giving him a good jobation.

The Powers, nevertheless, made it clear that they were fully in earnest. The Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* at Berlin reported that nothing could exceed the severity of the language held to him by Count Herbert Bismarck; while, at Vienna, Count Kálnoky absolutely refused to listen to the explanations by which the Greek representative attempted to justify the line taken by his Government. Lord Salisbury, about the same time, took what ought to have proved a still more effective step, by using very plain language to M. Tricoupis, who was on a sort of political tour in England, and urging him to use his influence with his countrymen to allay the rising storm in Greece. It

was finally decided to make another joint effort to bring the Hellenic Government to their senses; the form it took on this occasion being a collective Note, signed by the representatives of the same six Great Powers, and founded on a Declaration which had been drawn up by the Ambassadors at Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> We sent in our Note on the 22nd of October, the day before the opening of the extraordinary session of the Chamber; our hope being that it might have some sobering effect on the attitude of the Government at that critical juncture. The tone of the Royal Speech, which was exclusively devoted to the events in the Balkans, was decidedly moderate. Referring to the complete change which the revolution at Philippopolis had produced in the situation, and the military precautions it had rendered expedient, the Speech simply expressed the confidence that the Powers, in their solicitude for peace, would devise means for establishing a just and durable equilibrium between the several nations that occupied the Peninsula.

The guarded character of this language caused the greatest dissatisfaction both in the Chamber and outside of it. On the following day the Tricoupist organ, the *Hora*, issued a violent manifesto calling a mass indignation meeting for that afternoon. This was in exact accordance with the instructions sent from London to his adherents by M. Tricoupis, which were to support the Government, but only on condition of their "doing their duty by the country," and being prepared, if necessary, "to smash up everything" (*sic*). Under the pressure of the threat of so formidable a manifestation, M. Delyannis, who once before had been

<sup>1</sup> The final arrangements as to the future of the two Bulgarias had been entrusted to the representatives at Constantinople of the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.

the object of a similar outburst of public anger which nearly degenerated into riot, a few shots being actually fired under his windows, went down to the Chamber and made a declaration which for the first time clearly committed the Government to action in the national cause in given eventualities. The Prime Minister in fact saved himself by the skin of his teeth, and, to a great extent, at the expense of his Royal Master, in whose mouth he had placed unpopular language, reserving for himself all the credit of giving expression to the national will and passion, while not even attempting to associate the Crown in any way with the policy he announced. There was a great scene of fraternisation in the House; M. Lombardos, the former arch-agitator in the Ionian Islands, who acted as Tricoupis' *locum tenens*, going up to the Premier and warmly congratulating him. In the town, too, which was crowded with rampant reservists, the enthusiasm attained delirious proportions. The return, a few days later, of M. Tricoupis, who received a tremendous popular ovation, still further increased the ferment, and although he was carefully moderate in his language and attitude, his watchful presence acted as a constant warning to his rival that at the least faltering he would be swept from power.

Under these circumstances, we foreign representatives could not conceal from ourselves and from our Governments that the attempts made to stop the Greek Cabinet in their perverse course had completely failed. Our *démarche collective* had been replied to by the decree of mobilisation, and now came the almost defiant declaration of the Premier in answer to our joint Note of warning and remonstrance. The warlike movement, so far as could be judged, had passed beyond the control of a feeble, irresolute Administration.

It has seemed to me indispensable to recount—although it has been at immoderate length—the first stages of these difficulties, because of my sincere desire to apportion, with all due fairness, the responsibilities of the principal actors in them, and at the same time to set forth as clearly as possible the main causes that led to this curious phase in the affairs of Greece, at a memorable and decisive turning-point in Balkanic history. I have, as will presently appear, special reasons for seeking to deal in a spirit of the strictest impartiality with the motives and acts of the persons most concerned in the grave and painful crisis that followed, and trust that the distance of nearly twenty years which divides us from that period will enable me to treat of it as dispassionately as it will be truthfully.

This may perhaps be the most fitting place for speaking of the colleagues with whom I was now closely associated in these affairs. The *doyen* of our Diplomatic Body happened to be the Italian Minister, Marquis Curtopassi, a lively little Neapolitan of middle age, an intelligent man and a good fellow. Next to him in seniority came the German Minister, Baron de Brincken, who was an old London acquaintance of mine. We worked together most harmoniously at a very difficult time, and I never had, in the whole course of my career, a stauncher or more loyal friend and colleague. With the Austro-Hungarian Minister, Baron de Trauttenberg (now the delegate of his Government to the *Caisse de la Dette* in Egypt) my relations were likewise very cordial. He showed some hesitation at first as to going full lengths with us in the pressure we were instructed to bring to bear on the Greek Government. The position, however, of Austria-Hungary in regard to Balkanic affairs is neces-

sarily a peculiar one for geographical and racial reasons. Certain advantages which were believed to have been promised to Servia by the Cabinet of Vienna, and the protecting shield later on thrown over that country in stopping the short and, to Servia, disastrous war against Bulgaria, made it still more difficult for Baron de Trauttenberg to keep completely in line with us at the beginning. He was subsequently able to give us his full co-operation. Russia was represented in our committee of six by M. de Bützow, a pleasant man who had won his spurs in the Far East. At the final, and most critical, period of the crisis, however, he happened to be away, and left in his place as *Chargé d'Affaires*, M. Bakhmetiew, who proved a very capable representative of his Government. M. Bakhmetiew has since been playing a prominent part at the Court of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Albeit typically Russian, or rather perhaps Tartar, in outward appearance, this able and astute diplomatist had been partly educated in England, and was a graduate of Oxford. He spoke English like an Englishman, and was married to a bright little American lady, who was a valuable coadjutor to him in his diplomatic duties. With a Russian Grand Duchess as Consort of the Sovereign, M. Bakhmetiew's position was in certain respects a responsible one and somewhat analogous to my own, both our Legations being essentially *Missions de famille*. He agreed with me in thinking that we had a common interest in the welfare of the King and the dynasty, and I found him perfectly straight and reliable during the most delicate phase of our combined action. The French Minister, M. de Moüy, was an agreeable, eminently cultivated specimen of the older diplomatic school of his country. His archæological interest in Greece inclined him to espouse her cause with something of the ancient

Philhellenic ardour. From the first he rather encouraged the Greek hankerings after aggrandisement, and, by playing too much for his own hand at the last moment, gravely compromised, and indeed partially marred, the success of the joint efforts made to safeguard Greece from the evils wrought by an impolitic Administration.

The autumn months brought no essential change in the political situation, beyond accentuating the tension between Greece and Turkey. An inferior Agent of the name of Zygomalas, whom the Greek Government had injudiciously placed in temporary charge of their Consulate in Crete, was the cause of much acrimonious correspondence between the two Governments. The Turkish Vali, Sawas Pasha, charged this individual with seditious manœuvres in the island, and finally expelled him. The Greek naval armaments likewise contributed to raise Turkish suspicions. Although small, the Greek navy was fairly efficient, and there was wild talk at Athens of the ease with which a *coup de main* might be attempted in Crete and the signal of rebellion given throughout those islands of the Archipelago which were still under Ottoman sway. The mobilisation of the land forces, which, owing to the alacrity of the reserves in responding to the call to arms, had enabled the Government to place their raw levies, to the number of some seventy thousand men, in the field, was another standing menace to peace. I informed M. Delyannis, on the authority of our able and experienced Consul-General at Salonica,<sup>1</sup> that the Turks had massed a well-organised force of upwards of eighty thousand men on the Greek borders. The warning, however,

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Elijah Blunt, C.B., now retired on a pension.

produced little or no effect upon him, and all I was able to obtain was a general promise that he would see to the troops in Thessaly being cantoned at some distance from the frontier.

The attitude of the Greek Premier now became not a little disconcerting. He affected to be waiting "*les bras croisés*" for the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors sitting at Constantinople as to the fate of the two Bulgarias, and quite gave up the apologetic tone he had before assumed of being constrained against his better judgment to adopt military precautions. Early in December he became still more plain-spoken. Echoing intemperate language used in the Chamber by his colleague, the Minister of War (Mavromichalis, a descendant of the old feudal Beys of Maina), he now spoke of war as being unavoidable. It would come to a duel with Turkey. Very erroneous notions were entertained in Western Europe of the Greek military aptitudes, but these would before long be revealed to the world. His feeling at first had been that Greece could attempt nothing without the support of at least one of the Great Powers, and he had indeed looked to England to back him, but he had received no encouragement from that quarter, and certainly the British representative "*ne lui avait pas souri.*" He was now, however, quite prepared to go on alone at the right moment. His language, in fact, sounded like a travesty of the famous "*Italia farà da se!*"

There was some truth in his complaint of my "not having smiled upon him," for, as I wrote home in a report of one of my frequent interviews with the Greek Premier, I had "gone the length of almost brutal frankness" by telling him that his policy seemed to me to savour much too strongly of what the French call

*chantage*. It is only fair to him to add that he voiced to some extent the unreasoning public belief that to force the hand of Europe "a Greek question must be raised at all costs." M. Tricoupis himself had distinctly stated on his return from England that, had he been at Athens at the time of the Philippopolis *coup d'état*, he would, whether or not in power, have endeavoured to effect a *fait accompli* in favour of Greece by pushing a small force across the border at all risks, and thereby compelling attention to the just claims of his country. And, although unable to displace the mechanical majority in the Chamber of which the Administration disposed, he narrowly watched every move of M. Delyannis, and, while carefully avoiding all semblance of factious opposition, sedulously left him to bear the full responsibility of affairs at this dangerous crisis.

At the same time, as regards my personal views, although bound by my instructions in no way to foster any hopes of territorial compensation in the recalcitrant Greek Government, I could not help thinking that some degree of friendly intervention on the part of Great Britain might have good results. In fact, when asked for my opinion of a suggestion made by the Ambassadors at Constantinople that the time had come for threatening language to be used at Athens to bring the Greeks to their senses, I represented that the Hellenic Government were unquestionably in a position of great embarrassment. For internal reasons they could scarcely disarm without some hope of an equivalent being held out to them. The alternative that might, I thought, be placed before them was that, if they did not disarm, Turkey would fall upon them, and they would be left to the consequences of their rashness; while, if they did disarm, her Majesty's



Government might possibly be disposed to support their pretensions in reason. The Greeks I believed would probably be content with less than they had claimed at Berlin. As for Turkey, I thought she would find some compensation, for whatever territorial concession she might consent to, in an intimate alliance with Greece against the common danger from Russia or from the Slavs, while our friendly intervention, if successful, must make us paramount in Greece, and greatly strengthen the Royal authority.

The troublous year came to a close. Although, after the departure of the noisy reservists, now shivering and sickening in the Thessalian mountains, Athens was outwardly restored to calm, the country remained armed to the teeth, and, while recoiling from actual war, was obstinately bent on reaping some return for its efforts and sacrifices.

## CHAPTER V

### ATHENS, 1885-1886—THE DELYANNIS INCIDENT

THE winter season of 1885-86 turned out socially in every respect as dull as it was politically gloomy and fraught with anxiety. To begin with, the Athens of twenty years ago, although it had so much increased in extent and population, remained, for a capital of its size and importance, singularly backward in the amenities of modern life, and was absolutely devoid of public amusements or resources. It had indeed one theatre—a building of some pretensions—but the doors of this were closed all through my three years' residence in Greece, though it has since, I believe, witnessed the revival, under Royal patronage, of some of the masterpieces of the ancient Greek drama. In the summer months, a second-rate open-air theatre of varieties was to be found close to the swampy banks of the slowly-trickling Ilissus, and a similar institution of a superior class flourished on the sea-shore at Phalerum—the latter much frequented by the Athenian *beau monde*—with scratch companies of Italian opera or French *bouffes*. Concerts, or musical parties, were absolutely unknown. The modern Greeks are not much addicted to music, or in fact to the cultivation of art in any form, though living in the midst of so glorious an artistic heritage, which, to render them justice, they do their best carefully to guard and preserve.

The result of this state of things was that, beyond its incomparable ancient monuments and ruins, and

its art treasures—at the time I refer to only partially put in order and not yet displayed in spacious museums—Athens offered but few attractions by day, and none whatever at night, to the passing stranger or the habitual sojourner. There was not a single club, nor were there even any large public *restaurants*. *Cafés* on the other hand abounded, as they do all over the Levant. Hotbeds of political discussion and intrigue, where the *habits noirs* of About, now multiplied a hundred-fold, lounged half through the day, and late into the evening, in eager disputation over rival statesmen or parties, the claims and wrongs of Greece and the future of Hellenism.

Neither had the Greek capital kept pace with the nineteenth century in respect of its native society as much as in its growth and external aspect. A nucleus of very pleasant, cultivated people, in full touch with Western life and ideas, was nevertheless to be found there in a small group of Phanariote families that had settled in Greece in the earlier days of the young monarchy. These formed a somewhat exclusive circle or a sort of aristocracy, and derived a certain lustre from the title of Prince which a few of them had rather arbitrarily arrogated to themselves, on the strength of the dignity of Hospodar having been held by members of their respective families in the Danubian Principalities, when those countries were still under the Turkish dominion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Hospodars were simply Valis, or governors, like those of the other provinces of the Empire. With this difference that they were taken from the Christian Phanariote functionaries of the Porte who had been dragomans of the Palace, or had held other civil employments. The office was farmed out to them for a period which seldom exceeded three years, though they were occasionally reappointed on fresh payment of the necessary amount. The assumption of the title of Prince by the descendants of those who at some time or other held the office seems in many cases to have been purely arbitrary.

Prominent among these were the Soutzos. Prince Jean Soutzo, who was a former Athenian acquaintance of mine and a most gentlemanlike and agreeable old man, had been Minister at St. Petersburg for a good many years. He had a genuine taste for art, and was one of the earliest collectors of the charming Tanagra *terra-cotta* figurines which had been first discovered only a few years before, and have since been so extensively forged and imitated. His sister was married to Demetrius Paparigopoulos, the historian, who, together with Rhangabé, likewise of Phanariote origin, was one of the ablest Greek writers of that period. Madame Nathalie Soutzo, too, of the same stock, was a very accomplished woman, and had a *salon* that bore comparison with those of great European centres. The head of another branch of the Soutzos was the father of perhaps the prettiest and smartest girls in Athens society, but, in true Greek democratic fashion, he was simply an army doctor and chief of the Medical Staff of the Greek forces. Belonging to the same Soutzo connection was a pleasant gentleman of the name of Typaldos, who, being a personal friend of M. Delyannis, had been induced by that Minister to accept the post of Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, where he did valuable service while professing to disapprove of the adventurous policy of his chief. Of him I shall have to speak again presently.

Besides these and other cultured Phanariotes, like the Mavrocordatos, Karadjas, Argyropoulos, Murusis, with their Byzantine traditions, there were the high-sounding names of the descendants of leaders in the war of independence, Colocotroni, Canaris, Papadiamantopoulos, Criesis, as well as a few Ionians of distinction who sat in the Chamber or had migrated

for good to the Greek capital—the Theotokis (one of whom is now Prime Minister), the Romas from Zante, and Messalas, some of whom bore titles that had come down to them from the days when Venice held sway over the Seven Islands. Count D. Messala, Comptroller and Private Secretary to Queen Olga, and his wife and very charming daughter, were among the few intimates we had at Athens. The cheeriest and most humorous of men, Messala was full of affectionate memories of the old British connection, having spent many days of his youth on board our men-of-war, or at the messes of our regiments stationed at Corfu, which did not prevent his being a devoted servant and counsellor to his gracious and beneficent Royal Mistress.

All through this dismal, stormy winter, with its hurricanes of sleet and snow at Christmas and the dread shadow of war brooding over the country, the Court very naturally abstained from giving its customary entertainments. It happened also that a considerable part of the Palace was then actually under repair. The roof itself was in so bad a condition that the poor ladies-in-waiting who were lodged on the upper story of the great barrack-like structure, built in the days of King Otho, had, when going along the passages to their rooms in rainy weather, to put up umbrellas. On the 1st of December, nevertheless, we were bidden to dinner at Court on the occasion of the Princess of Wales's birthday. We were the only guests, the rest of the company consisting of the ladies and gentlemen in attendance upon the Royal Family. In every way it was a most pleasant party, with scarcely any vestige of Court etiquette, admirably served and *très soigné* as regards the essentials of food and wine. This was

our first opportunity of seeing the young Princess Alexandra, the King's eldest daughter and favourite child, who afterwards so endeared herself by her grace and beauty and charm of manner to all those who approached her, and was destined to so early a death after a short and happy union with the Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovitch. She was at this time little more than fifteen, and the Queen after dinner told my wife that she was thus early accustoming her daughter to see strangers, on account of the fear she had of her inheriting the extreme shyness with which she herself was afflicted. In her position, said the Queen, shyness was a positive suffering which she had never succeeded in entirely conquering. In the course of a long conversation I had that evening with the King, his Majesty spoke with sincere admiration of the prowess recently shown by Prince Alexander of Bulgaria,<sup>1</sup> and expressed some doubt of the success of any attempt to impose upon him the *status quo ante*, now that he was flushed with victory and had shown himself in all respects so capable a ruler. The *status quo ante* pure and simple, H.M. seemed to imply, could scarcely be re-established in the Balkan Peninsula after all these events.

With the opening of 1886 the situation in Greece began to assume a more serious aspect, and to some extent rendered the personal position of King George more trying and difficult. His Minister gave out that he was only waiting for the final settlement of the Eastern Roumelian question by the Powers, formally to claim the full execution of the decisions of the Berlin Conference in favour of Greece. Till

<sup>1</sup> In the short war with Servia.

then Greece would continue to arm and "keep her hand on the hilt of her sword." In one of my interviews with him at this period, I pointed out that there were the best of reasons for believing that "the final settlement" he awaited might be deferred for months, and I dwelt strongly on the impossibility of Greece bearing the terrible strain of her armaments for so long a time. The Premier admitted that the delay would be unfortunate, but said that he saw no other alternative. I then did my best to impress upon him that he had now an opportunity of rendering the greatest service to his country, and regaining for it at once the sympathies it was fast forfeiting in Europe. I offered, I said, no opinion either for or against the justice of the claims he put forward in the name of Greece, but there was no denying that the worst possible moment had been chosen for urging them. It was as clear as day that neither Turkey nor the Powers would listen to them. It seemed, therefore, the part of a patriotic statesman to open the eyes of his countrymen to the mistake that had been committed, and bring home to them the imperative necessity of disarmament. He would thereby gain the good opinion and indeed the gratitude of Europe, and when the proper time came the attitude of Greece would certainly not be forgotten. With the large majority he had in the Chamber, no Minister was in a better position to follow this wise and prudent course.

M. Delyannis did not deny that possibly the "*moment psychologique*" might not yet have come for Greece to assert her claims, but, as to the strong backing he had in the Chamber, he owed it, he said, solely to his following a policy which was that of the entire nation. He granted that he might of course be

left alone face to face with Turkey, but between concession and war Turkey would probably choose concession. Besides, it was well known at Constantinople that he had only to give the signal for all the Greek subjects of the Porte to rise in open insurrection. In any case the time had arrived when Greece must settle for good and all with Turkey.

Notwithstanding these vapourings of the Premier, which were worthy of ancient Pistol's "prave 'ords at the pridge," he had for some time past shown signs of depression, and had even hinted that he would be glad to be rid of the burden of office. Anyhow his grandiloquence was harmless as compared with the questionable arts to which he now resorted in his difficulty. He allowed it to be spread about that the militant policy he had adopted was much more the King's than his own, and went indeed so far as to give out that it had been in some degree reluctantly forced upon him by the impulse which the King had given to the warlike movement on his return to Athens shortly after the revolution at Philippopolis.

Nothing could be more disingenuous than this attempt to distort a few words, spoken to the crowd which had gathered under the Palace windows, into a warlike manifesto addressed to the nation. Although no one realised more clearly than did King George the dangers that were likely to arise for Hellenism out of the union of the two Bulgarias into an enlarged Slav State, he was far too sagacious and too accurately informed to expect any good from the game of brag and bluster played by his responsible advisers. There were, besides, reasons for thinking that the King had carefully avoided committing himself to their adventurous policy, and was rightly determined to leave with them all the responsibility of the critical situation it



had created. Not only was he supposed to disapprove the line followed by M. Delyannis, but he was believed to have expressed to him his dissent from it, and had probably taken care to put it on record in writing. He had in fact steadily applied himself to the task of staving off the outbreak of war, although no doubt alive to the risk he incurred that his Minister might seek to withdraw from a hopeless position by casting on his Sovereign the odium of the abandonment of a policy which, he would not scruple to assert, had been initiated by his Majesty himself.

The Powers, meanwhile, did not relax their efforts to restore tranquillity in the East by procuring a general disarmament. Although these efforts were really directed to stopping the war fever in Greece, the forces of Servia and Bulgaria still stood facing each other, pending the final settlement of their differences,<sup>1</sup> and it was deemed both fair and politic to address a European summons to the three Balkanic States simultaneously. We were, therefore, instructed to send in a fresh collective Note to the Hellenic Government, the drafting of which was on this occasion entrusted to the Russian Minister as representing the Government that had suggested this mode of procedure. Our Note, dated the 11th of January, strongly urged Greece to proceed to an immediate disarmament, which would be equally recommended to Servia and Bulgaria, and which the Porte was disposed to imitate; the Hellenic Government being at the same time invited to name the shortest period in which such disarmament could be carried out, so as to insure analogous measures being simultaneously taken by the two other Balkanic States.

<sup>1</sup> Peace between Bulgaria and Servia was concluded at Bucharest two months later, in March 1886.

Coercion, I should observe, was in no way suggested in this Note, although it contained in courteous terms a peremptory summons having for its object to bring home to the Greeks that all Europe was at this juncture in perfect accord in the determination not to be disturbed by war, or a vain pretence of war. Her Majesty's Government were at the same time averse to using minatory language, and I had personally taken upon myself to point out to Lord Salisbury how undesirable it seemed to me to threaten coercive measures which would afford the Prime Minister an opportunity for retiring with undiminished popularity, and might at the same time rekindle the expiring Chauvinism of the nation he was misguiding. By resigning under actual compulsion he could contrive to leave all the difficulties and dangers of disarmament to the King, so that, in the interests of his Majesty, it was far better that M. Delyannis and his colleagues should fall with all the discredit they deserved and without any possible halo of martyrdom.

Two days after the despatch of our communication the celebration of the Greek New Year took place. There was a Te Deum at the Cathedral, to which every one went in uniform, and afterwards a great reception at the Palace with all the ladies in full evening dress as at a drawing-room in London; the Queen and her ladies wearing the national costume, or rather an adaptation of it, which consists of a full white robe—simulating the coarse, long *chemise* of the peasants, who wear no other garment—with a soft, white, gold-embroidered train trimmed with red or blue velvet. The short Greek jacket worn with this was likewise edged with velvet and richly embroidered, the head-dress being a coronet of velvet—studded with gold coins—to which was attached a long white veil wound round the neck. Altogether a pic-

turesque and becoming dress that suited Queen Olga to perfection. In the evening there was a State dinner of some hundred and fifty persons, followed by a *cercle* which lasted fully two hours. It was on the whole an interesting but very fatiguing day, during which none of us could help watching the countenances and bearing of the Royal couple who, although under the stress of such anxiety, were as pleasant and gracious as usual, and allowed no trace of trouble or displeasure to appear.

A few days later (on 18th January 1886) we received the official answer to our collective Note. It was couched in moderate language, but reiterated the inability of the Hellenic Government to proceed to demobilisation, on the grounds that the questions raised by "the events of Philippopolis" had not yet received a satisfactory solution, and that the negotiations for peace between Servia and Bulgaria had not even commenced.

Meanwhile, the stubborn attitude of M. Delyannis had assumed a graver character in view of the completion of his naval preparations, which were much more significant and threatening than was the gathering on the northern frontier of a mass of 70,000 raw, ill-organised soldiers, who suffered cruelly from the cold of an exceptionally severe winter, and whose ranks were being daily thinned by fever and hardships. On the other hand, the squadron assembled at Salamis was known to be in a very efficient state, and was on the point of being reinforced by six new torpedo boats of a large size which were on their way to the Piræus from Stettin. There was some reason to fear that the Premier, relying on naval forces which were equal if not superior to those of Turkey, might attempt a bold stroke at sea, and, by pouncing upon

some Turkish island or bombarding a Turkish port, create a *fait accompli* that would in a measure force the hand of the Powers and compel them to take cognisance of the Greek grievances and pretensions.

These apprehensions led to my being instructed by Lord Salisbury to cause it to be brought privately to the knowledge of the King that the Powers had resolved to intimate formally to the Hellenic Government that no naval operations on their part against Turkey would be permitted. My message, I was afterwards informed, was received with much indignation by his Majesty, who greatly resented what he considered the unfair pressure applied to his country.

The crisis had now reached such a point as more than ever to convince me that the only way out of what seemed a hopeless *impasse* would be through a change in the Ministry, if this could be compassed. A few days later, on the morning of Saturday, the 23rd, I received telegraphic instructions to warn M. Delyannis himself, unofficially and in the strictest confidence, that naval operations by Greece against Turkey would not be permitted by the Great Powers. I at once called upon the Premier at his private house in one of the side streets leading out of the Boulevard du Stade. At that hour, in the forenoon of a very mild and sunny winter's day, the door of the Premier's unassuming residence stood wide open, and its inner hall was already crowded with the hangers-on and applicants for favours who, all over the Levant, are to be found on the threshold of those in power. I was quickly shown into M. Delyannis' study. I had brought with me, and subsequently at his request left in his hands, a paraphrase of the telegram I had just received. In doing so I strongly dwelt on the friendly spirit of the private and confidential warning it contained. I saw in it, I said, a final effort made by

Lord Salisbury to spare Greece the humiliation of the coercive measures which he indicated as impending. I had often before used considerable freedom of speech in my remonstrances with M. Delyannis on the headstrong course he was pursuing, and I was now resolved to make a last attempt to shake him in it, clearly discerning that, in spite of the bold front he still affected, the responsibility for the situation he had brought about was weighing more and more heavily upon him. On previous occasions I had already frankly told him that, in my opinion, and in that of my colleagues, he ought, for his own credit—let alone the good of his country—to yield and disarm, or retire. Now that he was driven to his last retrenchments I once more—speaking entirely for myself—sought to impress upon him that the moment had come when he must make up his mind to listen to the friendly admonitions addressed to him, or else resign. I put this to him in various ways, and, among others, in language the character of which was afterwards deliberately misrepresented, and which I therefore quote, premising that we always conversed in French, of which language M. Delyannis had a fair but by no means a perfect knowledge. “En vous opposant,” I said to him, “à la volonté, si nettement exprimée, de l’Europe entière, vous cherchez l’impossible. C’est de la folie que de vouloir persister dans la malheureuse voie que vous avez suivie jusqu’ici. Croyez-moi : quittez la place et allez-vous-en plutôt !”<sup>1</sup>

The Premier took all this in perfectly good part, but rejoined that his policy was not only that of the

<sup>1</sup> M. Delyannis took no sort of exception at the time to this French colloquialism, though it was afterwards quoted in his organ and by his friends as purposely intended to be offensive. As the late M. de Blowitz put it in a letter to *The Times* of the 19th February 1886, it was as if I had been made to say, with an atrocious accent : “Allez-vous-ong sur le Continong !”

nation, but also that of the King. I interrupted him here by saying, "C'est vous qui le dites!" The movement, he maintained, was irresistible. As for that, I retorted, I had watched it carefully. It had been started and fostered by got-up manifestations, and was kept alive through a press the tone and spirit of which I preferred not to characterise. On my again adjuring him to weigh well the responsibility he was incurring in face of such a demonstration as that of which I had given him notice, he replied that his responsibility was shared by the King. I rejoined that I utterly denied this. The responsibility rested with him alone, and I devoutly trusted that his Majesty would take care to leave it with him to the very end.

Finally, warming with my subject, I said to him that, by so obstinately adhering to a fatal policy, he was ruining Greece and imperilling the throne, and that if he persisted in it he would go down to posterity as the author of national disaster.<sup>1</sup> He seemed considerably shaken by my earnest expostulations, and, far from resenting their warmth and bluntness, he put in now and then a deprecatory "Mais mon ami!" and, with a trick that was familiar to him, soothingly laid his hand upon my arm. When at last I rose to leave him, and asked what reply I was to give from him to Lord Salisbury's message, he replied that, before coming to any decision, he must take the King's orders and consult his colleagues. We then shook hands, and he accompanied me from his study to the open street-door,

<sup>1</sup> At a much more recent period it has been M. Delyannis' unenviable lot to damage the interests of Greece still more seriously. During a debate which took place only the other day in the Greek Chamber, the Prime Minister, M. Theotokis, when attacked by M. Delyannis, vigorously retorted with a reference to the last Greco-Turkish war. To M. Delyannis, he said, must be attributed that disastrous struggle, with its ruinous results to the Kingdom.

seeing me get into my carriage and drive away in the broad sunshine, honestly rejoicing, as I went, that I had told him truths he had probably never heard before, and had done my best to relieve the King and the country of the evil incubus of his Administration.

On the following day (Sunday) the greatest excitement was caused by an article in the *Nea Ephemeris*—a paper often used by M. Delyannis for party purposes—which gave a most mendacious account of my interview with the Prime Minister. I had deliberately insulted him in the grossest manner, and on leaving him had actually slammed the door in his face. My recall would, no doubt, be insisted upon.

The attack, coming from such a quarter, was so despicable that I should have been disposed to leave it unnoticed, had not the article contained an almost textual rendering of the paraphrase of Lord Salisbury's telegram which I had left with M. Delyannis, and on the strictly private and confidential nature of which I had not failed to insist. The imparting of such a document to the press was so flagrant a breach of well-known diplomatic usage that it could not be passed over. I therefore wrote a private line to the *Secrétaire-Général* (Under Secretary) of the Foreign Office, M. Typaldos, with whom I was on terms of some intimacy, begging him to call upon me about an urgent affair. I then went to my German colleague, Baron de Brincken, and, placing him in possession of all the circumstances, asked him to be present at my interview with M. Typaldos.

On entering the room that gentleman at once said that he knew what I wanted to speak to him about. He had heard of the article in the course of last evening, and had immediately gone to the office of the newspaper to stop its publication, but had

unfortunately got there too late. M. Delyannis himself was extremely annoyed by it. If so, I said, there could be no difficulty in putting a denial of the statements contained in the calumnious article in the Government official organ, the *Proia*. That, replied M. Typaldos, was a matter of course, and I might "look upon it as already done." I inquired what form the denial would take, and said it might be as well that we should agree upon the wording of it. M. Typaldos assented to this, and, at my request, wrote down a sketch of the proposed contradiction. I made a few emendations in this, and copied it out for him, of course keeping the original draft in the *Secrétaire-Général's* handwriting.

We went on then to speak of the extraordinary indiscretion committed by the publication of Lord Salisbury's telegram; M. Typaldos making the remarkable admission that as he could answer for the discretion of the *employés* of the Foreign Office, he could only conjecture that one of the Ministers present at the Cabinet Council held the day before had seen the document, and communicated its contents to the *Nea Ephemeris*. Such a breach of confidence, observed the German Minister, who had been listening with much interest to what passed, was sufficient to make it very difficult for any of us to carry on our relations with the Hellenic Government.

To cut too long a story short, no contradiction of the statement in the *Nea Ephemeris* ever appeared in the Government organ. M. Delyannis did not hesitate to disavow his subordinate, and M. Typaldos himself, I regret to say, backed out, in anything but a creditable manner, from the engagement he had taken towards me in the presence of my German colleague. I had been careful, meanwhile, to inform the King, through a private channel, of the real circumstances of the



affair, and received from him a very kind message to the effect that he was well aware of its rights, but hoped that in his interest I would let the matter drop. I had of course also reported the occurrence at full length to the Foreign Office, and on the 27th had the satisfaction to receive a telegram from Lord Salisbury, entirely approving my attitude and the steps I had taken, and at the same time directing me to confine my intercourse with M. Delyannis within the strictest possible limits. The telegram—a very long one—arrived after midnight, and Henry Howard and Lyon, who deciphered it, most kindly came to our door and woke us up to tell us of its satisfactory contents.

I never met M. Delyannis again, except casually in the street, months afterwards, when he carefully avoided me. His equivocal attitude in the circumstances I have described, bore, I may now say, some bitter fruits as far as my after career was concerned. The “Delyannis incident” has since furnished a theme to the detractors and ill-wishers with whom all those who attain a certain standing in the public service have more or less to reckon. I owe deep thanks to the great statesman—now justly mourned by all England—who so loyally stood by me at this sharp and trying crisis. But it is a good case in point of the sardonic saying: “*Noircissez, noircissez ! il en restera toujours quelque chose !*” with which Beaumarchais is generally, but wrongly, credited. To those who in after years chose to remember against me the generally-forgotten “Delyannis incident,” it may now be a surprise to learn that I was personally much opposed to coercive measures being taken against Greece; that I thought then, and still think now, that it might have been better policy to help to enlarge her narrow borders; that having, during my first stay in Greece, seen her enriched by the beautiful Seven

Isles,<sup>1</sup> it would have been gratifying to me to witness her further endowment with the province of Epirus, or practically the Berlin frontier she claimed; and finally that, in the unquestionably strong line I took towards an irresolute and reckless Minister, I had chiefly at heart the cause of his Sovereign, to whom I was sincerely attached, and whom I knew to be anything but faithfully served by him. The wrong-headed policy of those who controlled the destinies of Greece at that time, marred what chances she then had, and turned all Europe against her. A desire to try and make clear the complex causes that led to the events of that troublous period must be my excuse for having dwelt at such length on the otherwise unimportant "Delyannis incident."

While what precedes was passing through the press, the Minister, with whom it was my unwelcome duty to contend during the acute crisis I have described in these pages, has fallen under the hand of a brutal assassin. The tragical circumstances of his end must alone have prompted me to attenuate, as far as I justly could, the strictures I have felt bound to pass on his policy. I can now only add that M. Delyannis has been truly fortunate in his death; calling forth, as it has, so striking and so imposing a recognition by his countrymen of his fervid Hellenism and of the absolute integrity<sup>2</sup> of a long life devoted to the service of Greece. The barrier between us is now impassable, but to readers in a country where political life, whatever its failings or blemishes, knows no personal rancour, I need not say that I have long since shaken hands in spirit with M. Delyannis over our differences of yore.

<sup>1</sup> Heptanesos, the State of seven islands.

<sup>2</sup> M. Delyannis lived and died a very poor man.

## CHAPTER VI

### ATHENS, 1886—THE BLOCKADE OF GREECE

THE mischievous article in the *Nea Ephemeris* had the desired effect of reviving the failing energies of the Delyannist war party. A mass indignation meeting was held in the Square immediately under our windows, at which a resolution condemning the conduct of the British Government was passed, and was ordered to be telegraphed to the Speaker of the House of Commons. From the square the mob made a rush for the Palace opposite, where they were stopped and turned back by a cordon of the Evzones on guard, and had to content themselves with a tumultuous visit to the house of the Prime Minister, who addressed a few words to them from his balcony. The general excitement was further raised to the highest pitch by the announcement that the Greek squadron at Salamis had left its moorings and put to sea with sealed orders "to avoid the brutal blockade of England."<sup>1</sup> British ironclads, it was wildly rumoured, might be expected to appear off the Piræus at any moment. As a matter of fact, however, there was probably at that time not one of our ships any nearer than Malta.

At a general gathering of all the heads of missions held at the Italian Legation, I gave my assembled colleagues a full account of the now famous "incident,"

<sup>1</sup> It was soon afterwards ascertained that the squadron, composed of eight ships, one transport and twelve torpedo boats, had simply gone to Chalcis in Eubœa.

and showed them the draft, which they unanimously approved, of my note to the Premier demanding the public rectification promised me—and which I never obtained—of the calumnious version given of my interview with him. There was so strong a consensus of opinion as to M. Delyannis' proceedings that, all through the following events, his official Wednesday receptions at the Foreign Office were carefully avoided by the Envoys of the Great Powers, who restricted their personal intercourse with him to calls on business admitting of no delay.

I now pressed on the despatch of the collective Note, based on Lord Salisbury's instructions, by which the Hellenic Government were formally notified that, in the absence of any just cause of war against the Ottoman Empire, no naval aggression by Greece would be permitted. However distasteful to me had been till then the notion of actually coercing the Greek Government, I was now reluctantly convinced that, in the interests of peace and of Greece itself, no other course remained open. Thenceforth I applied myself to render coercion as effective as possible on the spot, by seeking to keep all my colleagues well in line so as to insure really cordial combined action. The too often derided European concert certainly worked satisfactorily on this occasion, and was faithfully re-echoed in the harmony of its mandatories at Athens.

The motives of M. Delyannis' unwarrantable conduct soon became apparent. By means of the misstatements which he tolerated even if he did not actually inspire them, he not only succeeded in inflaming the public mind, but was afforded an opportunity of proclaiming, in a *communiqué* to the papers, the complete solidarity of the Crown and its advisers in the face of impending coercion, extolling

at the same time the patriotic sentiments of the Sovereign. By dint of these manœuvres he recovered some lost ground and regained popularity for the time being.

Meanwhile the trend of affairs in England no doubt contributed to encourage him in his adventurous course. The general elections in November had proved very unfavourable to the Conservative party, and, three days after my interview with the Greek Premier, the Government of Lord Salisbury was outvoted in the House of Commons on Mr. Jesse Collings' amendment to the Address. With Mr. Gladstone's return to power M. Delyannis' hopes of securing the support of England in his schemes of aggrandisement were for a brief period revived. He put off for several days replying to our last communication, and, when he finally answered us, did so in a still more high-handed manner than on preceding occasions. What hopes he may have built on the change of Administration were, however, speedily dashed to the ground. In answer to a telegram from the Mayor of Athens, Mr. Gladstone clearly stated that, however great his sympathies for them, he could not but tell the Greeks that the attitude they had taken up was indefensible and that the Powers were determined to oppose it. He expressed his views still more plainly in a letter to Mr. Mundella which was intended for communication to M. Tricoupis. "It would be bad enough," he wrote, "if the wishes of the Bulgarians were frustrated by Turkey; but if their fulfilment were prevented by Servia or by Greece, it would be a disgrace to mankind." It so happened that, only a few weeks before, we had been taken to see a statue of the illustrious statesman, by the sculptor Vitalis,

destined for a conspicuous position in front of the University buildings—a really fine work of art, and an admirable likeness on which we were conscientiously able to congratulate its author. Mr. Gladstone's message, and the very decided language he was known to have previously used, produced such a revulsion of feeling in the Greeks, who had hitherto idolised him, that all thoughts of setting up the statue, and exposing it to the public gaze and possibly to a disagreeable manifestation, were wisely given up for the time.

I cannot but contribute here my small meed of praise to the new departure in questions of foreign policy taken at this juncture by the incoming Liberal Administration. From this period may be dated, if I am not mistaken, a continuity in the conduct of our external relations which had scarcely been practised before and had certainly not been openly recognised. Thenceforward British interests abroad were almost entirely withdrawn from the arena of party contentions, and successive Ministries have since then held fast, with but little variation, to certain broad lines of policy in international affairs. The effect of this has been to give much greater weight with foreign statesmen and foreign public opinion to our counsels, these being understood to be now no longer chiefly guided by party considerations at home. To Mr. Gladstone, and still more to Lord Rosebery—who now made his *début* at the Foreign Office, where he was practically left a free hand—is primarily due this great and beneficial change which first signally manifested itself in the Greek crisis.

Warnings were not wanting to M. Delyannis from other quarters as to the intentions towards Greece of the new British Administration. My colleague

Baron de Brincken was charged with a private message to him from Prince Bismarck, to the effect that he must not indulge any expectation that the attitude of the Liberal Cabinet would differ from that of their predecessors, and that it might indeed prove even more decided. The personal intimacy between Lord Rosebery and Count Herbert Bismarck gave additional significance to this hint.<sup>1</sup> M. de Freycinet, too, held very uncompromising language to the Greek representative in Paris. The Greek Government persisted none the less in their preparations. A battalion of Evzones was somewhat ostentatiously sent from Athens to the front in Thessaly, and directions were given to form additional corps of these troops. Several steamers of the local companies were at the same time taken up as transports, and 20,000 more men of the reserves were called out by Royal decree. The same exasperating game of defiance in reply to the sternest admonitions went on as before.

Meanwhile the naval forces of the Powers were collecting by degrees in Cretan waters, and early in March the Duke of Edinburgh, who had succeeded Lord John Hay in the command of the Mediterranean squadron, took over the supreme direction of the International Fleet gathered together at Suda Bay. The illustrious Prince placed at the head of this European Armada—the formidable character of which was out of all proportion to the task it had to perform, and might well have gratified the susceptible Hellenes as a tribute to the importance of their country, second only to the vast armaments brought against it by

<sup>1</sup> In delivering this message Baron de Brincken, who was mindful of my own experience, strongly insisted on its confidential character. To his great disgust it was reported at length almost the next day in two of the Athenian papers.

Xerxes of old—was fully equal to the duties confided to him. His officers, with many of whom I came in contact during my stay at Athens, all looked upon him as a naval commander and tactician of first-rate ability, and, in the delicate management of his composite forces, he showed a rare amount of tact and judgment. The task assigned to him was rendered by no means easy of performance by the limitations imposed upon him. It was at first intended to blockade the Greek squadron, wherever it happened to be, simply paralysing any action it might be designed for against Turkish territory, but without using any force. The omelette in short was to be made without any breaking of eggs; Lord Rosebery wittily observing, in reply to the suggestion of some stronger measures, that he did not quite see his way to shelling the Parthenon. It nevertheless became advisable to make inquiry as to the state of the defences at Salamis and the approaches to the Piræus, and these, according to a report derived from the German officers who had recently come in charge of the torpedo boats purchased by the Greek Government at Kiel and Stettin, were found to be fairly effective.

It may be doubted whether M. Delyannis ever seriously contemplated naval operations, but reports which reached me about this time through the well-known correspondent of *The Times* at Athens, Mr. Stillman, whose posthumous memoirs were published not long ago, pointed to the Greek Government being encouraged underhand to attempt a *coup de main* on the Dardanelles, for which purpose they had been furnished with plans of the most recent defences erected there. It is not impossible that at this phase of the crisis M. Delyannis may have been secretly instigated to hold out, but if so, he was soon again



left to himself, and both at Athens and at Suda Bay the concert of the Powers was effectually kept up.

A short and welcome truce to all this agitation was afforded by the Carnival amusements which, though by no means brilliant at Athens, engross the population of all classes. In Athenian society these revels take the form of house-to-house visiting of small bands of maskers who call upon their acquaintances, and, under cover of their disguise, try to *intriguer* them.

There was a fancy dress children's party at the Russian Minister's where Henry Howard—who soon afterwards, to our great regret, was transferred to Copenhagen—was answerable for some excellent fooling. He and M. Bakhmetiew, of the Russian Legation, together made up a performing elephant which was led in by its black keeper (one of the Miss Rhangabés) and followed by an old woman (another of the Russian Secretaries) with a big drum, and two boy clowns. The elephant was admirably done, and caused the greatest amusement, but must have been dreadfully trying to Bakhmetiew, who took charge of the hindmost part of the beast, and was stooping the whole time in a very cramped position. Later on, the same performers re-appeared, all draped in long white Turkish bath towels, with grotesque masks and wigs and a head-dress consisting of an enormous sponge tied under the chin with red ribbon. It was a capital get-up, and the party were a merry lot. Among other antics, Howard and one of the Russians fought and knocked each other about in wonderful style. Howard was carried off and presently brought back as a dead man! The ghastly but ingenious trick was executed as follows: The Russian walking in front held his arms out straight

before him encased in jack boots. Howard followed with his arms also outstretched—his hands resting on the Russian's shoulders—and supporting a big pillow which formed the body of the defunct. A sheet tied round the necks of both men provided the necessary drapery, the illusion being completed by the hindmost man bending his head as far back as possible, the effect produced being quite that of two men carrying the body of a third on their shoulders.

Our family circle now acquired a welcome addition by the arrival of our two Etonians—my eldest son Horace (now First Secretary to H.M.'s Agency at Cairo) and my stepson Algy Caulfeild,<sup>1</sup> who were both past seventeen. They came out to us in charge of a German gentleman of the name of Homann, who turned out a perfect paragon of tutors. Herr Fritz Homann had been with young Lord Camden, and his thorough knowledge of English and his familiarity with English habits and ideas of course contributed to make him a very pleasant and valued inmate of the Legation, into which we were now at last able to remove from the Hotel d'Angleterre. It was a great relief from the monotonous strain of public affairs to have to busy ourselves with the furnishing of the house, the pile of cases we had brought with us from Stockholm many months before having of necessity remained untouched till now. We found the difficulties of housekeeping at Athens in most ways much greater than elsewhere, but ended by getting together a workable household and securing the services of a very tolerable cook—a stout, oily Neapolitan of the name of Ercole Belloni, who, apart from his *cuisine*, which was savoury enough, is chiefly

<sup>1</sup> Algernon St. George Caulfeild, of Donamon Castle, County Roscommon.

associated in my memory with the reply he once gave when my wife had to remonstrate with him about his arrangements. He had come up from his kitchen for orders on a piping hot day, and, standing there, in the not altogether spotless white garments of his calling, made many shifty excuses, and finally, with a gesture of despair, exclaimed: "*Ah! ze voudrais bien voir milady dans ma chemise!*" by which dreadfully graphic phrase the poor man of course only meant "in his place."

The anniversary of the declaration of Greek independence, which fell on the 6th of April, had been predicted as likely to be a day of disturbance and tumult. It nevertheless passed off very quietly, with the customary official *Te Deum* in the Cathedral, rendered picturesque by the attendance of a small remnant of ancient fighters in the national struggle, clad in old Palikari garb—a sight that reminded me of the touching band of tattered veterans of the *grande armée* whom, in my childhood in Paris, I had seen following the ashes of the mighty Emperor on the bitterest of December days. But for an insulting article in an organ of the Athenian gutter-press about the British flag which I hoisted as the other Foreign Ministers did theirs, in honour of the national solemnity, no unpleasant incident marked the day.

Our Governments now took an inopportune step by instructing us to inform the Hellenic Government officially of the settlement by the Conference at Constantinople of the Turco-Bulgarian question, adding the expression of the hope that Greece would in consequence defer to the unanimous wish of the Powers in favour of peace. After the menacing position which we had already been made to take up, this appeal seemed somewhat futile, and, as one of us

observed, reduced us, in transmitting the message of the Conference, more or less to the part of *facteurs* or penny postmen. The only result of this, as was to be expected, was another unseemly reply, coupled with a still plainer demand for the so-called Berlin frontier.

In the interval the Chamber had again been convoked in extraordinary session. During a protracted debate which ensued on a vote of censure on the Government, M. Tricoupis described the preparations made for war as quite inadequate, and the organisation of the army as much too incomplete for any serious military operations. He used scathing language about a policy which aimed at reaping victory, however improbable, while reckoning on the country being shielded from the results of almost certain disaster. Such a policy was unworthy of a free people which should have the courage fairly to face the consequences of its acts. It was certain, he said, that Greece had lost, for the time, not only the sympathies of the leading Powers of Europe, but those of the nations themselves. There could be no question, therefore, of public feeling imposing on the Governments a reversal of their bearing towards Greece. "At the same time," he somewhat perversely added, "the Powers must understand that force would have to be applied in this case as in that of any other nation, and they must not imagine that Greece, because she was small, would give in to a mere threat." It was Chauvinistic utterances like these from the leader of the Opposition that wrought much of the mischief, by hardening his irresolute adversary, the Premier, in his pernicious course; and to Tricoupis' speech in fact the division in favour of the Government was mainly due, the Chamber almost immediately adjourning after voting the credits demanded by the Premier and practically endorsing his policy.

The patience of the Powers was now, however, at last exhausted. Early on Sunday morning, the 18th, I received an unusually long telegram in cypher informing me in full detail of the measures it had been resolved to take. A collective Ultimatum would be addressed to the Hellenic Government, calling upon them to declare within a week whether they would undertake to disarm and replace their land and sea forces on a peace footing. A squadron, composed of one ship of each of the Powers, would simultaneously appear off the Piræus to support the presentation of this last summons, and, failing a satisfactory reply to it, the Envoys would be withdrawn, and would go on board their respective vessels. The East Coast of Greece would then be blockaded against all Greek shipping. For my part I was ordered in such case to repair to the nearest point in H.M. dominions—by which, as was subsequently explained, was meant Malta—taking the whole of my family with me. It would be difficult to give an idea of the excitement, and still more the relief, we experienced at this decision after the long strain we had been subjected to. Having received my instructions first, with a caution to keep them secret until my colleagues had received their orders, I waited somewhat impatiently for them to be likewise in a position to act.

We had now reached the beginning of Holy Week, which naturally brought with it a complete suspension of business. On Good Friday evening we took our whole family party to our former quarters at the Hotel d'Angleterre, as being the best point from which could be seen the processions that came up, long after nightfall, from the different churches in the lower town, each of them escorting a closed bier purporting to contain the body of the crucified Saviour on its way to sepulture. The streets on the line of

road were packed with dense crowds, every one carrying a long, thin, lighted taper. All the windows and balconies were full of spectators, who contributed to the illumination by the candles they held, the grease from which dripped freely down on the people below. It was a warm, beautiful evening, and, in the perfectly still air, whiffs of garlic, mingling with the smell of the burning wax and tallow and the pungent fumes of tobacco, strayed up to us from the patient, orderly throng, together with the nasal psalmodies of the marching priests. The processions, as they filed past, offered a curious, but scarcely an edifying spectacle. The great *cortège* from the Cathedral was of course much more effective than the rest, with its multitude of banners and the Metropolitan and his Chapter and clergy in splendid vestments—a magnificently embroidered pall being thrown over the sacred symbolic bier. Although there was but little real reverential character about the function—the Bengal lights and rockets, with the continual letting-off of squibs and crackers and the discharge of firearms being suggestive of a riotous day of rejoicing rather than one of solemn mourning—the effect of these processions, as they all converged on the large Palace Square, and filled it with innumerable lights, and with the sound of dirge-like chaunts and marches, was unquestionably weird and impressive. It was a quaint and interesting relic of those archaic forms of ceremonial worship which have come down unbroken from Byzantine days in the different branches of the old Eastern Church.

During the respite afforded by these celebrations, instructions similar to mine reached the other Ministers, together with the text of the Ultimatum we had to deliver. It was indeed high time that some action

should be taken to avert an almost inevitable collision on the frontier. So dangerously near to each other were the outposts of the forces that, on the Thursday of this week of fasting and prayer, a sharp exchange of shots took place near a village called Mitritza, brought about, it was said, by the poor, half-starved Greeks attempting to forage for sheep on the Turkish side of the border, in view of the Easter repast they were looking forward to after their long Lenten abstinence. Yet, even now, at the eleventh hour, the unexpected departure of the Russian Minister, Bützow, to wait upon the Emperor at Livadia in the Crimea, threatened seriously to attenuate the effect of our concerted action. As a matter of fact, the Russian representatives in this part of the world were always sent for when their Sovereign visited the southernmost part of his dominions. The Greeks, however, were only too ready to see in this journey an indication of Russian support in their emergency. It was known that the Russian Minister had had a long interview with M. Delyannis before starting, and those who had met the Premier afterwards declared that he was beaming with satisfaction.

By Saturday evening we had completed our arrangements for presenting the collective Ultimatum on the following Tuesday, in the forenoon of which day the squadron to be sent up from Suda Bay in support of the summons, would appear off the Piræus. All the details of this naval demonstration had been carefully settled with the Duke of Edinburgh, with whom I was in constant correspondence. It was somewhat disconcerting, therefore, to receive early on Easter Sunday a telegram from H.R.H. to the effect that he had already despatched the squadron, which would therefore arrive thirty-six hours before the time appointed. This was

of course due to some unfortunate misunderstanding, but it seriously deranged our plans. I at once requested Captain Eardley-Wilmot of H.M.S. *Dolphin*—which had been told off as *stationnaire*, or guard-ship to the Legation—to put to sea as quickly as possible and endeavour to intercept and turn back the squadron. Before he could do this, however, the ships were sighted off the coast in the afternoon, and though they stood out again for the night, the news of their arrival rapidly spread through the town, and produced the most intense excitement. Under the circumstances we concluded that our best course would be to sign and send in the summons at latest on Monday evening.

At this stage of the proceedings it was that the ill-timed intervention of our French colleague placed us in a position of great difficulty. On calling on M. de Moüy in order to ascertain whether his instructions, as we had been led to hope, enabled him to sign with us, he, for the first time, informed me that on Good Friday he had, by M. de Freycinet's orders, made a "supreme attempt" to bring M. Delyannis to his senses. He had warned the Minister that, if he did not give way, France must take part in the impending pressure, and that in such case he would have to do "with a united and indignant Europe" from which he could certainly not expect lenient treatment. M. de Freycinet's message had, he believed, greatly shaken the Greek Premier, and he seemed on the point of yielding. If this were the case, I observed to my colleague, nothing could be easier for M. Delyannis than to give at once in writing some explicit assurance of disarmament that could be submitted for the consideration of our respective Governments. I was obliged, I said, to add that my instructions precluded my holding back the Ultimatum



beyond Tuesday. M. de Moüy thereupon undertook to try and obtain the indispensable written assurance, and later in the day, whilst I was again in conclave with my other colleagues, he sent me word, through one of his secretaries, that he had already received very satisfactory verbal assurances from the Premier, and had been promised a written communication to the same effect in the course of the evening.

These vague assurances nevertheless appearing to all of us quite insufficient, we determined to accept nothing less than a categorical written engagement from the Prime Minister that the Greek land and sea forces would be placed on a peace footing in the shortest possible time. In the evening I went once more to M. de Moüy to acquaint him with this decision, when he showed me a private note he had just received from M. Delyannis, simply stating that the Council of Ministers were prepared "to listen to the advice of France," and that, "on the return of the Minister of War from Thessaly in a few days," an official communication to that effect would be addressed to him, the French Minister. I told my colleague that we could scarcely be expected to content ourselves with vague assurances addressed to France alone, and practically leaving the other Powers out of account. As regarded myself, I said, I begged him to place himself in my position. I found myself by force of circumstance in charge of a combination, as delicate as it was powerful and had been difficult of attainment. Ships had already been sent to back up our demands, and now, at the eleventh hour, I was asked to stop short, at the risk of throwing everything out of gear, on the strength of flimsy assurances coming from a Minister whom I, as well as my colleagues, had the best reason to distrust. Nevertheless, I was ready, if he would

entrust it to me, to show M. Delyannis' communication to my colleagues, and to take their opinion about it. I soon found that the latter entirely shared my view of the value of the Premier's professions. We thought it right, however, to give him a last chance of avoiding the delivery of the Ultimatum, and, for that purpose, I was requested to address a private note to our French colleague clearly stating the nature of the assurances that would alone satisfy us.

Any lingering doubt, as to the expediency of the course we were following, must have been dispelled by the publicity given by the Prime Minister the next morning to what had passed between him and M. de Moüy. M. Delyannis not only inserted a *communiqué* of his own composition in the *Proïa*, but used every means at his disposal to disseminate the idea that the French *démarche* had been accompanied by promises which would fully satisfy the national aspirations, and that Greece, although consenting not to break the peace, would continue in a full state of preparation until their accomplishment. To the American Minister, Mr. Fearn, and to his own brothers and his most intimate friends, the Premier stated, in so many words, that he had been guaranteed nothing less than the Berlin line, including of course Epirus. He was in fact making capital out of the French intervention at the expense of the other Powers, and was aiming at maintaining himself in office by representing the transaction as one in which Greece obtained all she desired without herself in any way yielding. When, therefore, we received from the Minister an identic Note which simply covered M. de Freycinet's message, together with the private note from M. Delyannis to M. de Moüy which the latter had already imparted to us, we resolved no longer to suspend our action, and

sent in the Ultimatum in the course of that evening (Monday, the 26th).

The intervention of M. de Moüy proved a regrettable incident in the difficult crisis which led to the blockade. By electing to act independently from his colleagues, he placed us at the last moment, when it was almost impossible for us to suspend our proceedings, in a position of great embarrassment which, but for the complete concord existing between us, might have seriously impeded the action we were ordered to take. At the same time, this distinguished diplomatist and writer, who was afterwards French Ambassador at Rome, must, I think, be absolved of any ill intent in playing for his own hand. He had imprudently allowed himself to be cajoled by the Greek Premier; but, a few days later, when he was shown by the Italian Minister the terms of the communication by which M. Delyannis had tried to stop us, he violently struck the table with his hand, and exclaimed that the Premier's conduct was positively sickening (*écœurant*). At the same time the unfortunate fact remained that France did not join in the final pressure exercised, and furnished no contingent to the international squadron.

The Ultimatum of course increased the excitement that pervaded the town, and it was announced in all the papers that "an armed demonstration" would take place on Wednesday, the 28th, on the Palace Square. Considerable military precautions were taken in view of possible rioting, and all the Legations were guarded. The threatening crowds on the Square confined themselves, however, to cheering the stock speeches of mob orators; and when a cavalry patrol rode down from the barracks above the Palace to clear the roads, a wild stampede took place in which our boys, who had gone

with their tutor to see the fun, were swept along by the fleeing demonstrators. It was only another instance of the hollow character of the agitation kept up by the Government.

The squadron from Crete meanwhile was at anchor in Phalerum Bay, where it was joined by the Russian despatch-boat *Plastoun*, which had hitherto lain inside the Piræus.<sup>1</sup> We went down to see them on a lovely afternoon, and the other Ministers following our example, the amount of saluting that took place as each Envoy passed from ship to ship was quite prodigious, something like 300 rounds being fired in less than two hours. The waste of gunpowder on such occasions has always seemed to me unnecessary if not unjustifiable. That same Thursday evening the formal reply of the Hellenic Government to the Ultimatum reached our hands. In substance it was a repetition of the very unsatisfactory communication we had already received. Excepting for a reiteration of the statement that, in deference to the counsels of France, Greece would not disturb the peace, it was quite evasive as to the all-important point of disarmament, its wording being such as to leave it practically in the power of the Government to maintain, for an indefinite time, armaments that would be an intolerable burthen both to Greece and to Turkey. In view of the hopes which M. Delyannis boldly asserted had been held out to him by France, there was a serious danger in this. While all of us agreed as to the objectionable character of the reply, we of course could only refer it to our Governments for their opinion.

The week's grace allowed in the Ultimatum was to

<sup>1</sup> This international force was made up of the ironclads *Neptune* (British), *Friedrich Karl* (German), *Kaiser Max* (Austrian), *Ancona* (Italian), and the Russian despatch-boat *Plastoun*.

expire on Monday, the 3rd of May. In the interval various private and unofficial attempts, into which I need not enter here, were made, in London and at Athens, to find a way out of the hopeless *impasse* into which M. Delyannis had driven his country and his Sovereign. All these efforts were rendered fruitless by the attitude of the Greek Premier, who, as one who knew him well expressed it, remained quite "*insais-sissable*." In the end we had to inform him officially that, while our Governments took note of the pacific intentions expressed in his reply to the Ultimatum, they did not consider these to be sufficiently explicit for the object in view, and we must therefore request him to furnish us in the course of the day with clearer explanations as to disarmament. Late that evening we received a reply expressing regret that the explanations in his Note of the 29th April should be deemed inadequate, but simply referring us back to that document. In the forenoon of the next day (7th May) we left Athens and went on board our respective ships at the Piræus.

The festival of St. George had taken place two days before, and it being the name-day of the King, I had attended the usual service at the Cathedral with the other Ministers. The King and Queen both appeared very depressed and sad, and to me more particularly the whole ceremony was a mournful one. I looked back to the days of King George's first arrival in Greece, when he was yet but a slight, delicate strip-ling, and, remembering his great kindness to me then, as well as on my return to his Court after an interval of some twenty years, I felt it hard that to me should have fallen the distasteful lot of carrying out a policy of coercion towards his Government and people. No one knew better than I how difficult and indeed

painful had been H.M.'s position during this protracted crisis. In obedience to an, if anything over-strict, observance of constitutional usage he had not separated himself from a Minister who, by virtue of his majority, was supposed to have the confidence of the country, although he was really distrusted by its best and soundest opinion. According to the generally received constitutional doctrine, therefore, the King had been right in not seeking to dissociate himself from a policy which at heart he certainly disapproved. Whether he might not have done better to take upon himself the dismissal of advisers who were ruining Greece, and make an appeal to the country, is a question which I will not permit myself to judge. Certain it is that six years later (in March 1892) he dismissed the same Minister on the score of his financial policy, and did so again in 1897 at the beginning of the war with Turkey. But by that time he had acquired a much stronger hold on the affections of his subjects, who had come to recognise the remarkable skill and sagacity with which he had throughout his reign served the best interests of Greece.

Before concluding this long account of tedious and abortive negotiations, I would pay a sincere tribute to the bearing of the Greek people at large during this most trying period. As I wrote at the time, the alacrity with which they responded to the calls made upon them by a reckless Minister, who all along deceived and misled them, and the patience with which they endured the burdens and privations of the mobilisation, were beyond all praise. What came home to me, however, most strongly was the quiet dignity with which the population of the capital, although exposed to the constant incitements of a

very low form of journalism, comported itself under conditions most galling to the national pride. Not a word nor even a gesture of disrespect was used towards me or my colleagues during the fortnight preceding and following the Ultimatum, though it was impossible not to feel that the foreign coercion applied deeply stirred the national sentiment. Whatever the errors of their Government, the Greek nation passed through the ordeal in a manner which only heightened the sympathies I for my part have never ceased to entertain for them.

## CHAPTER VII

### ATHENS, 1886—A HOLIDAY AT MALTA— RETURN TO GREECE

H.M.S. *Neptune*, which had come up with the international squadron from Crete, was a big ironclad only recently bought by the Admiralty from the Brazilian Government, and had such excellent accommodation that she had no doubt been selected on that account by the Commander-in-Chief as well fitted to take in so large a party as ours. When it came, however, to settling the details of our embarkation with her Commander, that gallant officer showed such undisguised dread at the idea of having to provide room for a small boy and his nurse, let alone my wife's maid, that I had at the last moment to apply to the Duke of Edinburgh for an additional ship, which H.R.H. kindly sent in the shape of the *Carysfort*, a corvette under the command of Captain Dupuis, a very pleasant man, whose promising career was cut short not long afterwards. We accordingly went on board the latter vessel, telling off only our elder boys and their tutor to the roomy *Neptune*, somewhat to the disgust of her exceptionally fussy Captain.

Before starting I placed in charge of the Archives of the Legation Mr. Walter Baring,<sup>1</sup> who had only just joined me as First Secretary, in succession to

<sup>1</sup> Now H.M. Minister at Montevideo. Mr. Baring and the other Secretaries left behind by their respective chiefs, had no official intercourse with the Greek Government, beyond notifying the blockade. By one of the nice distinctions which are dear to diplomacy, they were *chargés des affaires* and not *chargés d'affaires*.



Mr. Howard, and took with me our last new Attaché, Mr. Strickland Constable. Under instructions from home, I had before taken the King's orders as to whether he wished me to keep within reach off the coast of Greece. H.M., however, declining the offer, I shaped my course for Malta *vid* Crete.

We had a roughish day and night of it in the *Carysfort*, but by 6 A.M. of the 8th anchored in Suda Bay right in the centre of the allied fleet, which, including first-class torpedo boats, made up a total of forty vessels—a sight which of its kind was unique, especially having regard to the composition of this imposing force. The Duke, who had requested me to come here to confer with him about certain details of the blockade, instead of going straight on to Malta, showed us much kindness and attention, but explained that he was unable any longer to spare the large ships which had brought us from the Piræus, and must therefore transfer us for the rest of our journey to the *Imogene*, a yacht of 460 tons, whose habitual duty it was to act as *stationnaire* to our Embassy at Constantinople. After spending a very interesting and busy day amidst all the bustle and preparation of this great naval force, which was to put to sea the next day, we went on board our yacht towards evening and steamed away in great state, each ship, as we passed it, turning out its guard to salute the Envoy's flag we flew at our main.

From these naval honours we all too soon subsided into a condition of abject discomfort. We had experienced half a gale in coming from the Piræus, but that evening, when once we were well out of the bay, we found as nasty a sea as I can remember during many cruises in the treacherous Mediterranean waters. In the ugly North-Easter she had to face for the next

forty-eight hours the dainty *Imogene* was of course a mere cockle-shell. It blew in fact as hard as must have done "the tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon," encountered by the great apostle on his journey on this very same track. The worst of it was that, from her Commander downwards, almost every one on board was lamentably sea-sick, even the cook and the ship's steward striking work, so that it was scarcely possible to get anything in the shape of food. We were in fact absolutely neglected. The water, too, came in freely and swamped me in my bunk, while, for want of ventilation, the closeness of the luxuriously furnished cabins became quite intolerable. The *Imogene's* record for that matter happened to be dead against her. She had been sold to the Admiralty by her original owner, Mr. John Burns, who had found her unseaworthy, and was really only suited for the smooth waters of the Bosphorus, where all her ports could be kept open night and day. In rough weather the forepart of the vessel was always under water, and the men's things were never dry. She had now been temporarily turned into a store-ship for the squadron, with the unpleasant result that she was anything but clean or fit for passengers. In our family circle the miseries of that voyage in the *Imogene* have remained proverbial to this day.

It was the greatest relief to find ourselves in harbour at Malta early on Tuesday, the 11th. Soon after we had come to an anchor, the Governor sent me a telegram from Walter Baring informing me that M. Del-yannis had tendered his resignation, which had not been accepted by the King, who, I was very glad to learn, properly insisted on his Minister bearing the full responsibility of the situation he had brought about. There was some satisfaction, too, in hearing that the great fleet, after leaving Suda Bay for the

blockade on Sunday, had been compelled to put back by the violence of the gale that had well-nigh swamped the wretched cock-boat to which our party had been consigned.<sup>1</sup> Most welcome of all, however, was the sight of the yacht *Chazalie*, and a pressing invitation from its owners, our friends the Falbes, to dine with them that evening. They were on their way to Athens on a visit to the King, and I had for some time past looked impatiently forward to Falbe's arrival there, as his intimacy with H.M. might have proved very useful to me at the acutest stage of the crisis. As it was, I was able through him to convey to the King much that it was desirable he should know.

Presently there came on board Captain Chesney—A.D.C. to General Sir Lintorn Simmons,<sup>2</sup> the Governor—charged with kind offers of service. By his advice we went in quest of rooms to the Grand Hotel, a rambling, tumble-down building where in bygone days some dignitary of the old Sovereign Order of St. John had no doubt dwelt in state. The rooms in it were as large and lofty as they were bare, and inside some of them nests of bedrooms had been run up with partitions, at varying levels; corridors and stairs being contrived in them in the oddest way in the different corners. In this strangely constructed hostelry we none the less soon made ourselves quite comfortable. It was admirably situated at the corner of the Strada Reale and St. George's Square, at right angles with the

<sup>1</sup> A few hours after our arrival, Prince George (now Prince of Wales) embarked in the *Imogene* for Lisbon, whither he was going to invest the King of Portugal with the Garter. On his return H.R.H. came to see my wife, and told her that the weather had been such that he had never left his berth, the Captain consoling him by saying it was nothing to what we had gone through.

<sup>2</sup> The late Field-Marshal Sir John Lintorn Arabin Simmons, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

Governor's Palace and the mainguard facing it. After our recent experience of raucous Athenian mob gatherings, it was a pleasing contrast to watch from our windows trim detachments from the different splendid battalions of the garrison—Gordon Highlanders, York and Lancaster and others—relieving guard at noon or trooping the colours once a week. The sober, orderly routine of English garrison duties struck one all the more from its being carried on in the midst of all the exuberance of Southern life and colour of this wonderful Mediterranean stronghold of ours.

I gather from my wife's diary that after receiving visits from some of the military and other dignitaries of the place, we spent the rest of the afternoon with Mr. Walter Hely-Hutchinson, at that time Secretary to the Government of Malta,<sup>1</sup> and his mother, Lady Donoughmore, at a Palazzo they rented a little way out of town, and where Lady Mayo and one of her sons were staying with them on a visit. We just got back in time to dress for dinner on board the *Chazalie*, and there, to my delight, we found my very old friend the Marquis de Jaucourt as well as Major Seymour Wynne Finch. To me it was genuine relaxation to meet people with whom I had been intimate in days long past, and in wholly different circumstances, and thus to get away entirely from the wearisome train of thought by which I had been pursued and oppressed all through these last months at Athens. In this respect our few weeks' stay at Malta was the most perfect holiday I had ever enjoyed. M. de Jaucourt, who has left so many friends in England, belongs to that small class among his countrymen which to this day remains the *fine fleur* of French society, but has unfortunately,

<sup>1</sup> The Honble. Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, G.C.M.G., now Governor of Cape Colony.

through force of tradition and circumstances, kept too long aloof from public affairs. He and I went the next day over the Cathedral Church of St. John, where one literally treads the dust of chivalry, the splendid fabric being entirely paved with beautiful slabs of marble of every colour—four hundred, it is said, in number—on which are engraved the coats of arms and epitaphs of the knights who are buried beneath. The walls, too, are covered with armorial bearings, amongst which Jaucourt discovered the escutcheon of one of his ancestors, though his family happens to be one of the very few remaining of the old French *noblesse* which, having adopted the Reformed faith, have adhered to it ever since. With its sumptuous monuments of successive Grand Masters, from Villiers de l'Isle Adam to Perellos and Rohan, its mass of gilding and its beautiful mosaics, the cathedral is probably still one of the most richly decorated churches in the world, though the French, when they first took the place, despoiled it of many treasures and relics. Among these was the right hand of St. John the Baptist, encased in a great golden glove studded with precious stones, which was afterwards restored to the last of the Grand Masters, Hompesch, and by him was taken, as an offering, to the Emperor Paul,<sup>1</sup> to St. Petersburg, where it is said to be still carefully preserved in the Winter Palace.

In this church, too, are kept the famous tapestries, after designs by Rubens, Poussin, and others, which were made at Brussels by order of the Spaniard Perellos, whose *armes parlantes* (pears) figure on most of them. These had been allowed to get into

<sup>1</sup> The Russian Emperor had been most irregularly elected Grand Master of the Knights of St. John in October 1798, six months after Malta had been occupied by the French under General Bonaparte.

a ruinous condition, and, when they were shown to us with a private order from Mr. Hely-Hutchinson, were being repaired under the supervision of the Italian artist Palmieri, who had already been engaged seven years on the work. In fact the many traces still left of the splendour and luxury of the Order, during its rule of just over two centuries and a half, make Valletta a singularly interesting place. No statelier abode can be imagined than the great Palace on St. George's Square, which our Governors have occupied since the days of "King Tom";<sup>1</sup> and several of the ancient Auberges—called after the different nations or languages into which the Knights were divided, with resonant names like Provence, Auvergne, Castille, Bavière, and which now are turned into quarters or mess-rooms for our officers—are equally striking buildings.

Nothing could exceed the attention that was shown us at Malta by Sir Lintorn Simmons and his family at the Palace, with its monumental staircase which is so wide and easy of ascent that decrepit Grand Masters are said to have been carried up it in their litters; its splendid corridors and state rooms; and the noble armoury rich with Turkish spoils taken during the memorable siege of 1563; and, most precious of all, the silver trumpet that sounded the retreat from Rhodes after its heroic defence by l'Isle Adam. The late Admiral Ward,<sup>2</sup> Superintendent of the Dockyard, likewise showed us much civility at his commodious official residence by the waterside, adjoining the immense Admiralty store-houses and the dismal dungeons hewn out of the rock,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Maitland, second son of the 7th Earl of Lauderdale, and a great benefactor to Malta as well as to the Ionian Islands.

<sup>2</sup> Third son of the 3rd Viscount Bangor.

where the slaves who manned the Maltese galleys were kept chained up when not at sea.

Certainly our Governors have inherited a number of enviable habitations from their knightly predecessors. San Antonio and its cool loggias and spacious shady terraces, its quaint, formal gardens, and the scent from its luxuriant orange groves, is the very dream of a country home in this semi-African climate, and the appropriately poetical birth-place of one of the most attractive and interesting of our Princesses. Verdala, too, and the then almost disused tower of Selmoon, standing on a height that overlooks the scene of St. Paul's shipwreck, are both in their way delightful summer retreats.

The Queen's birthday, which was kept on the 29th of May, is perhaps the most prominent of my Maltese recollections. Shortly before noon of a very hot day we joined the Governor's party at the saluting battery, whence the view over the Grand Harbour was simply magnificent. The men-of-war were all dressed in rainbow fashion for the occasion, the deep blue water being dotted by any number of the picturesque tented native boats, with tilted prows and painted in the brightest colours, while the grim ramparts that girdle the harbour were scarlet-lined by the troops of the garrison. On the stroke of twelve the flagship gave the lead with a Royal salute which was repeated by all the vessels in harbour, and, when the thunder of the guns had died away, there followed the *feu de joie*, ushered in by twenty-one guns from Fort St. Angelo, fired in three sets of seven, in the intervals of which the continuous line of infantry manning the walls gave a running fire of musketry. The strains of "God Save the Queen" were taken up at the same time by one regimental

band after the other, the whole show ending by the Governor, surrounded by a brilliant staff, mounting the rampart at the saluting battery and leading off in person a deafening cheer which, like the firing, was borne echoing round the entire circle of the bastions and battlements. It was altogether a most imposing and inspiring function, and the thought that at the very same hour similar honours were being paid to the Sovereign at every point of her world-wide dominions could not but stir and affect one at the time. The pageant of the day was fittingly concluded by a grand tattoo and concert of the united bands of the garrison on the Floriana Parade Ground, which was lighted up by bonfires and by the torches borne by a cordon of soldiers. Seated as we were with the party from Government House in an embrasure of St. John's counter-guard, and looking down through the dark, sultry night on the troops and the crowd in the fitful glare of the torches, the general effect was exceedingly striking and fantastic. From the parade-ground we went on to supper with the hospitable Gordon Highlanders. These loyal festivities terminated two days later with a great evening garden party at San Antonio, the palace and its square tower being most artistically outlined, and the gardens illuminated with a profusion of small coloured lamps—over 11,000 in all being used for this decoration; so we were told by a smart little Canon of the Cathedral of St. John who had designed and carried out the whole scheme.

These halcyon days at Malta were soon to come to an end, however. Affairs had settled down at Athens. M. Delyannis had at last resigned, and a transition Ministry had been got together which decreed the indispensable disarmament. The blockade



was raised, and M. Tricoupis then consented to form a new Administration, which was still in office when I finally left Greece nearly two years later. I received orders to return to my post, the comfortable troopship *Humber* of 1600 tons being placed at my disposal for the journey. I have never revisited Malta, but a few pictures of that curiously fascinating sea-girt dependency of ours are still vividly stamped on my memory. Quite unique is the treeless, wind-swept aspect of the interior of the island, which has been well compared to a vast stone quarry, so effectually do the high inclosure walls that line the roads mask the marvellous, painstaking husbandry which supports an average of no less than 2000 souls per cultivated square mile. A swarming population in fact, with scarcely a visible tree or a blade of grass. Then, too, there is the lonely, abandoned city<sup>1</sup> high up on the hill, with massive seemingly untenanted buildings and empty echoing streets—a city of the dead it seems—and its grand cathedral full of dim memories of the shipwrecked apostle to whom it is dedicated, and built on the traditional site where he was received and “lodged three days courteously” by Publius. As for Valletta itself, with the gay Southern life of its admirably kept streets, the bells of its numerous churches, the splendid lines of its ancient forts and ramparts, and, above all, the singular mingling of British orderliness and Philistinism with the exuberant animation and the fervent Roman Catholicism of a population of semi-Arabic descent and speech, it stands out as one of the most striking of my crowded recollections, while I am grateful to it to this day for the change and rest I found within its walls after a season of much stress and anxiety.

<sup>1</sup> Citta Vecchia.

We found Athens very hot and dull and empty when we got back there on the 13th June. But few of our colleagues had as yet returned, almost the only one being the Turkish Minister, Feridoun Bey, a friendly little man, somewhat of the type of his countrymen whom Prince Gortchacow used to refer to disparagingly as not real Turks, but only "*Turcs du boulevard*." Feridoun, by the way, had taken a house in the street which skirts the inclosure of the beautiful Palace gardens, so wonderfully conjured up some forty years before by poor Queen Amélie out of the barren, stony Attic soil. In the scanty shade of the pepper trees lining this street he used to take his morning walks, and often meeting there our small boy with his nurse, had made great friends with the little fellow. One day he wrote in English to my wife to ask us to lunch with him, and begged that she would bring with her "the Turkey's best friend," meaning of course his juvenile acquaintance. Poor Feridoun! His French was superior to his English and possibly to his diplomacy. His last post was Madrid, after which he seems to have got into some trouble with the powers that be at Yildiz Kiosk, and vanished from the diplomatic horizon.

Peace, or rather the lassitude following upon a protracted period of intense excitement, was now the order of the day in Greece. Even the able and resolute statesman who had fortunately returned to office lay on his oars and allowed his ambitious aims to rest for a while. In the course of the next two years I saw a great deal of M. Tricoupis, who—I have it under his hand—came to look upon me as a true friend to Greece, and before long freely opened his mind to me about his hopes and plans. His adherents in his own country, as well as his many admirers in England,

with the latter of whom he kept sedulously in touch, saw in him the Cavour of the East, and confidently hoped for results from his indomitable energy similar to those we now witness in united Italy. Those who thus thought and hoped, took insufficient account, it seems to me, of the fact that the great Piedmontese statesman had, ready to his hand, an ancient, well-organised monarchy with a loyal and disciplined people, instinct with the best military traditions—an admirable nucleus in fact for the larger State of which he laid the foundations. Greece, unfortunately, fulfilled but few of these conditions, and was therefore not in a position to leaven the East as Piedmont had leavened Italy.

When Count Sponneck, at the dawn of King George's reign, made his youthful Royal charge say that it would be his task to found a model State in the East, the programme, however aspiring, seemed possible of performance. Such a State, it was not unreasonably thought, might by degrees attract to itself the whole of outlying Hellenism, and thus realise what was possible in the impossible dream of the *grande idée*. Since then twenty years had been unprofitably spent in Greece in party strife; in the paltry game of ins and outs, with its fatal results of new men and new measures at every change, of reckless finance and unsound administration. In the words of one of our most eminent statesmen, written in 1887, "the Greeks had lost their opportunity. Between their declaration of independence and the Marathon massacre they wasted about half a century, and though they have made progress since that time, the lost opportunity cannot be regained." In the interval quite new and formidable forces had sprung up in Eastern Europe. As Sir William White pointed out,

about this time, in a remarkable Memorandum on "The Rivalry of the Greek and Slavonic Races in the Balkan Peninsula," the real nationality of the millions of Slavs in Austria and Turkey had been but very imperfectly understood down to a quite recent period, being in great measure obscured by their religious obedience to the Greek Patriarchate. The Turkish Rayah, whatever the stock whence he came, was roughly accounted a Greek in a region where religion entirely overshadowed race. It is in fact just possible to imagine a thoroughly prosperous and progressive Greece becoming at that period the paramount State in the Levant by drawing to itself this great body of Slavonic co-religionists in whom racial instincts yet slumbered undeveloped.<sup>1</sup> But in the last quarter of a century the Slav masses which were now arrayed against Hellenism had become conscious of their ethnical claims and destiny. Once more to quote the same statesman: "The Bulgarian has been created; and though he may not be strong enough to hold the Straits, he will be quite strong enough to prevent the Greeks from doing so." With such a complete transformation of its racial conditions scarcely any part was left in the East for a Greek Cavour.

To be fair to M. Tricoupis, he was, in spite of his Chauvinist attitude, much too clear-sighted to entertain extreme views of aggrandisement. The object he had at heart was rather to preserve to Hellenic culture and Hellenic influences those districts of Central and Southern Macedonia that were the last remnant of the splendid inheritance to which the Greeks of the *grande idée* not so long ago still laid claim. On one

<sup>1</sup> The Bulgarian schism, so vigorously favoured by General Ignatiev, when Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, was a death-blow to any such hopes and dreams.

occasion he showed me on the map a line which, briefly described, started from Durazzo on the Adriatic and ran to the neighbourhood of Seres, a little to the north of the Ægean, while keeping to the south of Ochrida and Bitolia (Monastir). This he thought quite acceptable, and all he looked for, he said, would be a tacit recognition of a right to moral action within this Hellenic sphere, the object he held to being that "when the pear became ripe" and the final settlement took place—say some ten or twenty years hence—the region awarded to Hellenism should have been duly prepared for Greece to take over, without fear of collision with Bulgarian or other claimants. It is needless to point out that since the period when the Greek Premier imparted to me his views for a solution of part of the racial difficulties in Macedonia, these have only been intensified and rendered well-nigh insoluble by the intricate local juxtaposition of hostile populations and the bitter warfare waged between rival religious establishments.

M. Tricoupis' personality offers so interesting a study that I must be excused for borrowing from a sketch of it I made many years ago. Of his habits and disposition, I wrote, it is not too much to say that they are truly Spartan. He leads a life of assiduous labour, with scarcely any relaxation. He is frugal to excess, while his cast-iron constitution, which seems indifferent to both food and rest, enables him to get through an incredible amount of work, and, in the case of protracted sittings of the Chamber, makes it possible for him literally to tire out his parliamentary adversaries. His one passion is power, and for that he is willing to pay the price of continuous effort at the fullest pressure. Add to this a complete absence of self-seeking; an exalted, though perhaps somewhat

unreasonable, patriotism; the most scrupulous integrity and an absolute rigidity of principle; and you get a statesman of no ordinary type and, what is above all striking, having but little in common with that of his countrymen. It need hardly be said that M. Tricoupis is not, and cannot be, popular in the ordinary sense of that term. He resembles Aristides far too much for that.

When thus writing of the upright, masterful Minister—in some respects the most remarkable I ever had to deal with—I little foresaw that, after a few more years of restless activity, he would be carried off in all the vigour of middle age by an insidious malady,<sup>1</sup> leaving Greece the poorer by the loss of the greatest statesman she had known since the days of her ancient glory. No account of Charilaos Tricoupis would be complete without a mention of his Egeria, the faithful sister who attended to his few wants, watched over him with untiring devotion, and was to him the most valuable of collaborators. In her simply furnished rooms on the upper story of a quiet corner house of the *Boulevard de l'Université*, and surrounded by beautiful palms and other plants of all kinds—her only luxury—*Kôpia Σοφία* sat, morning, noon, and night, at the receipt of custom; interviewing at all hours Tricoupis' friends and supporters, and indefatigably doing the work of half-a-dozen able private secretaries for the brother whom she passionately worshipped and to whom she was useful beyond words. A very clever, highly educated woman, brought up in England and familiar with the best of English society, but whose sole interest in existence was centred in the austere, sardonic companion of her youth. The years she went through after his loss must have been sad and empty indeed.

<sup>1</sup> M. Tricoupis died at Cannes on the 11th April 1896.

I was soon able to establish cordial relations with the new Cabinet and its chief, with whom I had had more than one interesting conversation during the crisis that preceded the blockade. Very shortly after our return from Malta we had a big diplomatic dinner for M. Tricoupis and his colleague and intimate friend, M. Etienne Dragoumis, to whom the Foreign Department had been entrusted. I have preserved a real regard for M. Dragoumis, who was an enlightened and highly honourable man and a credit to Greek public life. The Dragoumis' home, where the Minister's mother, wife, and sisters—all very pleasing, cultivated women—lived together in patriarchal fashion, was one of the most attractive *intérieurs* in Athenian society. Altogether the Tricoupis Cabinet was well composed, and comprised, as Minister of Marine, the actual Prime Minister, M. Theotokis, who belonged to one of the best Corfiote families and had an agreeable wife with considerable musical talent.

Meanwhile, private business of a pressing nature obliged me to apply for a few weeks' leave of absence. I got to London on the 22nd July just after the general election which followed the decisive defeat of Mr. Gladstone on the Home Rule question. The Liberal Government were in fact on the point of leaving office.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, a pleasant surprise was in store for me on the part of Lord Rosebery, who wrote to tell me that the Queen had been pleased to confer on me the honour of a K.C.M.G., and obligingly added the hope that I would "find in this distinction some compensation for my labours during the late crisis in Greece." The grant of this decoration could not have been better timed, as being an admirable answer to renewed violent

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury's second Administration, in which Lord Iddesleigh held at first the seals of the Foreign Office, came in on the 3rd of August.

attacks made upon me in the Delyannist press, which, in reporting my departure from Athens, stated that I had been suddenly recalled and had fallen into complete disgrace. I had dined in Berkeley Square a few days before, and had already been much gratified by Lord Rosebery's reception of me. A circumstance worth relating occurred at this dinner. Among the other guests were Lord and Lady Grey, the handsome Mrs. Brown Potter, whose first season in London it was, and old Sir John Drummond-Hay, who had just retired on a pension after rendering really eminent service for a quarter of a century as our representative in Morocco. Sitting next to our host, after the ladies had left us, I was pointedly asked by him whether I did not think that Sir John, who faced us, looked in the best of health and still quite equal to the work and responsibilities of his post. The fact was, added Lord Rosebery, that as regarded the seventy years rule, under which Sir John was retiring, he himself was strongly of opinion that it was desirable that, in applying it in certain cases, a wise latitude and discretion should be allowed to the Secretary of State.

Although my time was mostly taken up with tiresome business, I with my younger boys Willie and George spent a few days at Luton Hoo, where the Falbes had a party in honour of Princess Mary and the Duke of Teck, and their elder children Princess May and the present Duke. Percy Ffrench and Maffei<sup>1</sup> were there, and the young Cavendish Bentincks and the Duchess of Marlborough with her daughter Lady Sarah. I had to take in the old Duchess, I remember, and found her naturally and touchingly radiant over

<sup>1</sup> The late Marquis Maffei, Italian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, who had served a long time in England and was well known in English society.



the success of her son Lord Randolph. The whole party was extremely gay and animated. A band of straw-plaiters from Luton, led by the local chemist, played during dinner and afterwards for dancing, when even Princess Mary was induced to take a turn with Falbe. On the following evening the dance music was provided by my boy George, then a Naval Cadet in the *Britannia*, who, even at that age, showed unusual musical talent and played with all the swing and go of a young Viennese. Of other social doings of these few weeks I remember dining *en petit comité* at Holland House, with a few *habitués* such as Lord Fortescue, Miss Throgmorton and Mrs. Leo Ellis (now Harriet, Viscountess Clifden), and meeting there Count Hübner, the ex-ambassador and traveller, with whom I arranged to go down the following Sunday to White Lodge, where we were both asked to dine with ever kind and cheery Princess Mary. The next day I went for the night to Knebworth, the Hertfordshire home of my old friend and colleague, Lord Lytton. The object of my visit was to thresh out with the ex-Viceroy of India the question of certain old claims against the Government of the Nizam of Hyderabad in which I was deeply interested. Lytton, who could be a *grand charmeur* when he chose, gave me some valuable hints about this affair, and I spent a delightful, and not altogether unprofitable, evening under his roof—sadly disfigured, it seemed to me, by the questionable heraldic ornamentation it had received at the hands of his father. The only visitor besides myself was beautiful Miss Mary Anderson, then at the zenith of her short but brilliant career on the stage. She appeared to me to be as charming as she was attractive, and was evidently a great favourite with the gracious lady of the house and her daughters. Leaving

London on the 12th of August, I took the French Messageries Mail-boat *Donnai* at Marseilles on my return to my post.

The heat all through this summer at Athens had been terrific, the thermometer registering as much as 98 degrees inside our spacious rooms at the Legation, and this lasted till well into September. The only respite we had were the lovely moonlit evenings passed on our great terrace overlooking the gardens of the Ministry of Finance, and the queer, dark little church of St. Theodore, which is one of those whose foundation is attributed to the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, and was rebuilt so long ago as the eleventh century. The tranquil tenour of our lives in the empty, sun-baked town was first disturbed by the deposition and violent abduction of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, soon followed by his return and final abdication—startling events which once more for a time set all European diplomacy agog, and seriously threatened the general peace. Shortly after this political upheaval in the Balkans, Greece itself was visited by a very severe and calamitous earthquake. The shock, which brought back to me my Chilean days, was strongly felt at Athens and in Continental Greece, but its worst ravages were confined to the western coast of the Morea; the centre of the disturbance being the Gulf of Arcadia, along the shores of which flourishing places like Philiatra and Grigoliani were laid in ruins, upwards of six thousand dwelling-houses and several hundred lives being destroyed by the visitation, which attained the proportions of a national disaster. I telegraphed to the Duke of Edinburgh, and, partly at my suggestion, the *Agamemnon* and the *Iris* were ordered to the scene of the catastrophe with stores, tents, and succour of various kinds for the sufferers. A

good deal of money, too, was sent from England, but the resentful spirit engendered by the blockade was still so strong that a very inadequate sense of this efficient help to them in their trouble was evinced by the Greek Government and people.

The same uncordial attitude was observed towards the Mediterranean fleet when, in the course of its autumn cruise, it visited the Piræus early in October. We of course did our best to entertain the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince George, then serving as a lieutenant in the *Dreadnought*, and had a couple of dinner-parties and a small dance for them at which the members of the Government and a few other Greeks of distinction were present. The visit, which had been arranged by express orders from the Admiralty, was on the whole, I am bound to say, unfortunately timed, and gave scope to caricatures and articles in very questionable taste in the Opposition press, of which my excellent friend Martelaos, our model *chancelier* and translator, made for me copious extracts every morning. One regrettable result of these unfriendly manifestations was to make the officers of the squadron chary of granting leave to their crews, none but picked, good-conduct men being allowed to go on shore. A great deal of money thus remained untouched in our seamen's chests, to be spent afterwards at Zante and Corfu instead of benefiting the not over-prosperous victuallers and petty tradesmen of Athens and the Piræus.

Later on, some British travellers of distinction visited Athens. Lord and Lady Herschell, Sir John and Lady Lubbock, and after them Mr. Chamberlain, with his family and Mr. Jesse Collings, came there on the way from Constantinople. It was a great pleasure to us to renew acquaintance with the distinguished statesman whom we had seen for the first

time at Stockholm some four years before. Mr. Chamberlain was treated with great distinction at Athens. A dinner was given in his honour at Court, and the King received him twice in private audience. He had some important conversations with M. Tricoupis, whom he sounded as to his views of a possible future settlement of national spheres in Macedonia. On one of those occasions it was that Mr. Chamberlain spoke to the Greek Premier of the line of division I have already referred to above, and which had first been suggested to him at Constantinople by Mr. Washburne, of Robert's College, a great authority on all Balkanic questions, and the educator, so to speak, of Bulgaria, and of most of the men who have had any leading part in that country. The meeting between two statesmen of so high an order—differing in many respects, but having in common the rare attributes of unflinching determination and exceptional clearness of vision—could not but be interesting. I have little doubt myself that the cordial attitude towards him of the eminent English Liberal leader contributed to the vigorous action taken by M. Tricoupis shortly afterwards.

The Greek Premier was just then, it may be said, at the culminating point of his career. Six months before, in June, in the midst of the last throes of the mobilisation crisis, he had fearlessly forced through a reluctant Chamber a most drastic programme of electoral and administrative reform, greatly reducing the number of deputies and enlarging the electoral districts, and thereby dealing a heavy blow to the corrupt wire-pulling by which so much pressure was brought to bear on the representatives, and through them, on the Government. His measures likewise comprised the suppression of numerous *eparchies*, or

*sous-préfectures*, each of which had been a focus of intrigue and bribery. Public opinion had strongly supported him in these sweeping reforms.<sup>1</sup> In November the Chamber met for the autumn session, and M. Tricoupis had to lay before it a Budget which, on his own showing, imposed the heaviest financial sacrifices on the country, and provided for additional taxation to the amount of twenty-two million Drachmai.

It was not to be expected that the deputies who had been made to perform a sort of *hari-kari* would give a favourable reception to the Prime Minister's financial proposals. The Opposition at once resorted to systematic obstruction, which was met by M. Tricoupis in a highly characteristic manner. He announced to the Chamber that, in view of the difficulty in which they were placed of keeping together a sufficient quorum for the transaction of business, the Government could not conceal from themselves that they had reached a crisis which required serious consideration. He hoped, therefore, to make next day some communication to the House that would remedy this unsatisfactory state of things. Meanwhile he proposed that the House should adjourn. In the evening he obtained the King's signature to a decree of dissolution, which was placarded, the following morning, on the walls of the *Boulé*, the gates being closed two hours before the appointed sitting. Such was the contumelious treatment dealt to, and well deserved by, a body which, after backing M. Delyannis in his disastrous policy, had then deserted him, and throughout its brief existence had shown neither principle nor real patriotism.

<sup>1</sup> M. Tricoupis' measures diminishing the parliamentary representation and enlarging the constituencies were subsequently repealed.

## CHAPTER VIII

ATHENS, 1886-1887—THE JUBILEE YEAR

EARLY in November we paid a short visit to the Türrs at their villa of Isthmia near Kalamaki on the Saronic Gulf, at the eastern entrance to the Canal which General Türr was then engaged in cutting through the Isthmus of Corinth. The railroad from Athens to Kalamaki, which passes through Eleusis of the dread mysteries and ancient Megara, is extremely picturesque, besides being a fine bit of engineering, and in some places indeed, notably near the Kakē Skála, almost trying to the passengers' nerves—the line being boldly carried along a narrow ledge on the face of the steep Skironian cliffs, with a sheer fall of several hundred feet to the waters of the Gulf that wash the rocks below. Close to the station at Kalamaki the Türrs had built themselves a very pretty house, surrounded by broad, shady verandahs, and with a spacious garden which, for Greece, was exceptionally well laid out and cared for.

The General's wife, *née* Bonaparte Wyse and granddaughter of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, still preserved great traces of beauty and was an agreeable woman and an excellent hostess. The only guests besides ourselves were a waif from the days of the Second Empire in the person of the chief engineer of the Canal, a brother of the too notorious Marshal Bazaine, with his plain, but bright and pleasant daughter, who acted as a sort of *dame de*

*compagnie* to Madame Türr. We were made most comfortable in every way, and were taken early next morning by the General to see the works on the Canal. Of its length of six kilometres only two and a quarter had been completed at that period and the water let into the cutting. On the occasion of a recent visit of the Royal Family, a sort of balcony had been built out at a point whence one could scan the whole extent of the works and form some idea of the difficulties of the undertaking, the channel being in great part cut out of the solid rock. The General told us that the navvies employed on it were almost all Italians, Armenians, or Montenegrins, the Greeks showing little aptitude, and still less liking, for that class of labour.

At the Corinth end of the Canal we were taken in a small steamer for a short run into the Gulf, which here appeared as a great inland lake with lovely views over the carefully cultivated shores towards Aegion and Patras—the centre of the important currant-growing industry—the sharp profile of the Acro-Corinth, and further back the jagged summits of Penteskouphia and Phouka soaring high above the smiling prospect. It was altogether an interesting visit to interesting people. The great-niece of Napoleon and her handsome old Garibaldian General, who had long turned his sword into a ploughshare, or rather into the pickaxe of the engineer, seemed to be a thoroughly well-assorted couple, and led Darby and Joan like lives on their property, much taken up with their poultry-yard and bee-hives, and aviaries full of rare birds. After fighting stoutly in his youth in the cause of Hungarian, and then of Italian, liberty, Stefan Türr was devoting himself to opening a new route for international com-

merce, and had exchanged the revolutionary ideals of his youth for the more harmless utopia of universal peace and brotherhood among nations. Isthmia—now probably deserted since the death of its mistress—figures in my memory as the scene of a pleasing idyll of past middle age set in beautiful, classical surroundings.

This winter of 1886–87 at Athens differed in all respects from the preceding one. The war-clouds had passed away from the horizon, and we were at last given an opportunity of judging the social resources which the Greek capital afforded. The coming of age, too, of the Crown Prince Constantine, Duke of Sparta—a title, by the way, by which H.R.H. is scarcely ever spoken of in Greece<sup>1</sup>—was made the occasion of rejoicings and festivities on a great scale at Court and in Society. The young Prince, who had just completed his eighteenth year, and, on leaving the Military Academy, had attained officer's rank, took the military oath in the Cathedral, the King himself leading him to the altar, whither the colours were brought up by a detachment of the Mavromichalis regiment, the Prince reciting the words of the oath in a clear, steady voice, while holding a fold of the flag in his hand. He really seemed the only person unmoved in the crowded Church, the Queen and the young Princesses showing much emotion, and even the crowd of bearded and gorgeously robed bishops and ecclesiastics grouped round the altar unmistakably manifesting their feelings. A great cry of "Zito" resounded through the Church when, at the conclusion of the service, the young heir to the throne embraced his father and mother. As much *éclat* as possible was judiciously given to this

<sup>1</sup> Under the extremely Democratic Greek constitution titles, and more particularly those with territorial designations, are not recognised by law.



celebration of the coming to man's estate of the first Orthodox Prince born in, and called to reign over, Greece. An historically interesting detail of the ceremony was the conveyance of the Queen and her daughters to the Cathedral in a very handsome State coach, used for the first time, and only recently bought in Paris, where it had originally been made for the proposed solemn entry of the Comte de Chambord on his restoration to the throne of his ancestors.

But much the most important and characteristic feature of these fêtes was the attendance from all parts of the Kingdom of upwards of three-fourths of the Demarchs or Mayors. The majority of these were simple villagers, and came to a State Ball at the Palace in their ordinary clothing, many of them in *fustanella* dress, but all showing perfect good manners and decorum. A few of them were accompanied by their wives in the homeliest attire. I noticed one of these—a rather pretty, bright little woman, in a dark green stuff gown and black gloves—being presented to the Queen in the course of the evening. She was evidently delighted with H.M.'s kindness, but was quite at her ease, and showed none of that *mauvaise honte* which would have made most Englishwomen of her class awkward under such circumstances. The innate dignity and good-humoured simplicity of the country people in Greece are indeed remarkable. "*Rien*," writes the mordant About, "*n'est plus doux, plus honnête et plus bienveillant que la gaieté des paysans grecs. Le mérite en revient à leur bon naturel, mais surtout à leur sobriété.*" The Demarchs—some four hundred of them—were feasted the next day at a Court banquet, and much amused their Royal hosts by coming up afterwards, one by one, and,

after heartily thanking them for their hospitality, simply taking their leave without waiting to be dismissed.

Another significant circumstance of these celebrations was the presence of deputations from most of the Greek communities abroad with congratulatory addresses and valuable offerings. Among these, two cheques, of 100,000 francs (£4,000) each, were presented to the Crown Prince by the Greeks of Pera and Alexandria, to be applied to any purpose he might think fit. It was manifest that the whole Hellenic world took a lively interest in these rejoicings, following as they did upon a period of much and deeply felt tribulation.

Two balls were given at Court, for the first of which something like two thousand invitations were sent out. The Bavarian architect who designed the great unlovely Royal abode seems almost to have foreseen these democratic crowds, for there was space enough for all, except in the immediate vicinity of the Royalties, who, there being no estrade or dais for them, were hemmed in on all sides, no attempt even being made to keep a clear floor for them when dancing. In other respects these State functions did much credit to the officials who had charge of them, for in the *monde égalitaire* of Athens the order and etiquette without which no Court can be properly kept up are but little understood or respected.

The example set at the Palace was promptly followed during this winter season ; really fine entertainments being given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the rich banker and philanthropist Syngros, M. Criesis of the Crown Prince's household, and the Schliemanns at their Palace of Ilion with its strange mixture of admirable classical decoration and incongruous furniture and upholstery of a deplorable German middle-class type. Alas ! for these Athenian balls ! Although

the brightest and most indispensable element of such diversions was not wanting in a number of pretty, well-dressed girls, conspicuous among whom were the strikingly handsome daughter of the General Vassos who afterwards commanded the Greek expeditionary corps to Crete in 1897; charming Edith Messala, now the wife of the Austro-Hungarian Envoy at Dresden, L. de Vélics; and a very attractive Mlle. Mourousi, the male contingent was sadly deficient. The *jeunesse dorée* of Athens were too deeply immersed in politics or business to condescend to take part in these frivolous amusements. With the exception of a few officers like Hadjipetros (the son), young Messala and others, these serious youths were scarcely ever to be seen in the *salons* of Athens. It thus happened that almost the most energetic *beau valseur* of the place was an ancient General Ralli—a great character in his way—who in his youth had served in the war of independence, and was certainly past seventy when I knew him. In spite of his tanned, parchment skin, and thick-set Quasimodo-like<sup>1</sup> figure, the old gentleman never missed a dance, and was an *enragé* leader of *cotillons*. He lived and danced on, I suppose, for a good many years afterwards, till one fine day, when he found that his legs had quite struck work, he deliberately blew his brains out.

There were, nevertheless, in the best set of Greek society, some extremely pleasant people, of whom I must not forget to mention kind, spirituelle Madame Zoe Baltazzi, since dead, who kept a most agreeable *salon* and entertained charmingly, and also her niece, the clever, handsome wife of the Deputy Boudouris, who some years after we left Athens met with a sad

<sup>1</sup> Quasimodo, the bell-ringer in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*.

fate, being drowned with her husband and the Crown Prince's private secretary, M. Maskaki, by the capsizing of a sailing boat in a sudden squall in Phalerum Bay.

At Athens we had no large British community like those which in some continental capitals prove so doubtful a blessing to the unfortunate British representative abroad. Beyond the small staff of the Legation, where poor Francis Carew<sup>1</sup> had now replaced Ernest Lyon as Second Secretary, the only resident English we saw much of, besides old Consul Merlin and his son (now Consul at Volo), were the Penroses and the Dicksons. The eminent architect and archæologist, who only recently died at a very advanced age, was at this time guiding the first footsteps of the British School at Athens (founded in 1886), which has since, under Professor Gardner and his successors, achieved so brilliant a record by its work in Crete and other Hellenic regions. Mr. Penrose was a long, frail-looking, mild old gentleman, with an absent, hesitating manner that rather detracted from his powers as a lecturer. The truth being that, for a man of his great attainments, he was singularly shy and diffident. Nevertheless, a thing to be remembered was hearing him, on a glorious afternoon, when the western glow was just beginning to fade from the Acropolis, expound, as he stood on the steps of the marvellous temple, the secret he had wrung from it of the perfect harmony and proportions of its lines.<sup>2</sup> The last time I came across Penrose was a very few years ago in London, when I casually strayed into the great Cathedral to the care of which he gave much of the closing period of his life.

He was blest with a devoted wife and three

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Carew died at Paris, much regretted, in March 1888.

<sup>2</sup> See his "Principles of Athenian Architecture."

daughters—a learned one, a lively one, and a lovely one—all charming in their several ways, and the last and youngest so strikingly statuesque in her good looks, in the poise of her head and the line of her neck and shoulders, that she might well have stepped down from the “Portico of Maidens” in the ancient fane so eruditely commented upon by her father. Such a type as hers necessarily, one might say, bound her to Athens, and there she met with a husband in Arthur Dickson, who is now the manager of the Ionian Bank. The elder Dicksons, too, were very good friends of ours. What slight knowledge I acquired of modern Greek I got in puzzling through the graphic pages of *Loukis Laras*<sup>1</sup> with the worthy Dickson, who, in collaboration with the present Sir Edgar Vincent, had compiled a very useful handbook of the euphonious Romaic idiom. Dickson was a great favourite at the Palace, where he gave English lessons to the young Princes. Eventually, at my recommendation, he was appointed British Vice-Consul at Athens. He and his helpful, capable wife—both dead now—were of great service to us when we first set up house at the Legation under considerable difficulties.

There was yet another English-speaking family that contributed to enliven existence at Athens, and more particularly made that place of limited resources very pleasant for our grown-up youths and their tutor. I refer to the United States Minister, Mr. Fearn, and his wife and daughters, who were exceedingly popular at Athens and in much favour at Court, where sprightly Miss Mary Fearn’s frank ways and quaint Americanisms afforded not a little amusement in exalted circles. Mr. Fearn, in whom I had a very pleasant and cultured colleague,

<sup>1</sup> The very interesting novel of D. Bikela.

hailed from Louisiana, and was therefore thoroughly at home in French—an accomplishment which my experience tells me is not very general in a service, preparation for which seems to me to be somewhat injudiciously neglected by our Transatlantic cousins. Private theatricals, country junketings and other amusements brought our respective young people a great deal together, and have ever since made the friendly Fearn a household word with us. Visits from a few distinguished travellers, too, helped to diversify our lives. My old friend Sir Henry Drummond Wolff passed through on his way back to Constantinople to negotiate his last, non-ratified, Convention about Egypt, while Mr. Samuel Plimsoll—of load-line fame—with his wife, and Professor and Mrs. Westlake, made a stay of a few days at Athens. Later on the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans came in their yacht with Miss Mary Higgins, and Mr. Frederick Leveson Gower was another of our visitors about this time, and went with our family party, one brilliant day, I remember, on a pleasant picnic to the interesting old abandoned monastery of Kæsariani, which lies half concealed in a romantic wooded dale at the foot of Hymettus.

In the midst of this round of unaccustomed gaieties I was much shocked by the tidings of the sudden death of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Iddesleigh, some interesting particulars of which were sent to me from the Foreign Office. This tragical event produced all the greater sensation from its coming in the midst of the difficulties caused by the abrupt secession of Lord Randolph Churchill from the Government. There is every reason to believe that, with the object of facilitating any new combination that might become necessary, Lord Iddesleigh

had some days before offered to resign, and thereby make matters easier for Lord Salisbury, towards whom he had none but the friendliest feelings. On the afternoon of the 12th of January, at a quarter to three o'clock, he was talking in his usual cheerful tone to one of the staff of the Foreign Office, and had then put on his overcoat to go across to the Treasury to keep an appointment with the Prime Minister. Five minutes later news came to the Foreign Office that he had broken down, and his private secretary, who at once went over to him, found him lying in a state of collapse, on a sofa in the ante-room to the study of the Prime Minister. He recovered consciousness sufficiently to say, "Leave me alone," and, when his clothes had been loosened, asked for a chair. Soon afterwards, however, there came two convulsive struggles, and he passed away without those who were with him being able to say precisely when. Heart failure was of course the cause of his death, brought about, it was afterwards maliciously and unfairly hinted, by emotion consequent on a serious disagreement between him and his colleagues in the Cabinet. In Lord Iddesleigh the country lost one of the most upright and unselfish of its public men.<sup>1</sup>

The winter soon passed away, marked by a brief spell of cold such as had not been known at Athens for many years. Snow fell so abundantly on the 21st of January and following days, and lay so deep on the ground, that I had a regular snow-balling match with our boys at the lawn tennis court on the Kephissia road. For a short week one was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone spoke of him as "a man in whom it was the fixed habit of thought to put himself wholly out of view when he had before him the attainment of great public objects."

driven entirely to forget southern latitudes, and was carried back to northern winter seasons at Berne and elsewhere, so bitter was the north wind blowing across the mountains and sweeping the bleak, whitened Attic plain. Presently came all of a sudden the first burst of spring, which in no region that I have lived in is more surprising than in Greece. A few days' rain and the entire aspect of the country was changed as though by magic. A touch of the wand, as it were, brought out the new tender tints of the olive groves round Colonus, the first silver foliage of poplar and plane trees, and, in their slender shelter, the sprouting of the wheat and barley. The dry water-courses by the wayside were now so full to the brim that, in places, the rushing water overflowed the roads which but yesterday were smothered in white dust a foot deep. Everywhere, beneath the trees and in the fields, the bare, brown, fissured soil was hidden by an eager, vivid vegetation, and made bright by myriads of wild flowers—hyacinths, scarlet poppies, and glowing anemones—while, in the blue vault above, the fleecy clouds threw marvellous violet-tinted shadows across the pale green shimmer of plain and hillside. In the fresh, vernal air there was the rustling of boughs, the song of birds, the cooing of doves, and the buzz and hum of the countless insect world. It was spring in right earnest, loud pulsating spring come into the land over-night. How different from our feeble counterfeit of it; the weary, half-hearted struggle with winter and “the rough winds” which, with us, all too often “do shake the darling buds of May.” The ideal transformation scene lasted only a very short time—the pitiless sun-rays saw to that—but, while it lasted, it was incomparable.



For us it was the spring of the memorable Jubilee year, and our thoughts turned homewards. I applied for, and was granted, the cumulative four months' leave to which I had long been entitled. Before we availed ourselves of it, however, I obtained the Queen's permission to celebrate her Jubilee and birthday together on the 24th May, when we gave a big official dinner for the King and Queen, followed by a small dance. With the scanty resources of Athens this was no light undertaking. We had to order the requisites for a really pretty *cotillon* from Paris, the lights for the illumination from Vienna, and essential items for the dinner and ball-supper from Marseilles. The hot weather which had now set in enabled us to include the terraces at each end of the Legation House in our field of operations. We lighted up the splendid long one facing the Acropolis with a profusion of small coloured lamps, and rigged up on it a small tent for the Royal Family, decorated with Oriental stuffs, and flags and trophies of arms from H.M.S. *Condor*, Captain May,<sup>1</sup> which the Duke of Edinburgh had sent to the Piræus for the occasion. Certainly the vista of the great terrace, brilliantly roofed in by arches of light, was very effective, and our fête was in every way successful.

Our Royal guests were most kind and complimentary about all the arrangements, and I was much amused, I remember, by King George's asking me how we had contrived to get together none but clean-shaven extra waiters (whom we had put into spare liveries), no self-respecting Greek servant consenting as a rule to part with his hirsute appendages. How our excellent butler—whom I had brought out from England,

<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral May, now Controller of the Navy.

and who proved a very able organiser—had managed to find these men was more than I was able to explain to his Majesty. It was in its way quite a *tour de force*. One very sad memory attaches to that evening. It was literally the first *début* of the lovely Princess Alexandra, then barely seventeen, whose bright promising life was to close so few years afterwards. The Queen had graciously consented to let her daughter enjoy her first ball at our house with her brothers the Crown Prince and Prince Nicholas.

We got to London in June, a full week before the great celebration, and parted there, to our sincere regret, with Mr. Homann, of whose pupils Algy Caulfeild was now going to an army crammer in Essex, while I proposed sending my eldest son, Horace, to Lausanne to perfect himself in French before competing for the Diplomatic Service. Of my two other boys Willie was at Wellington, preparing for the Woolwich Academy, and George had become a midshipman in the *Alexandra* flag-ship in the Mediterranean, to which the Duke of Edinburgh had kindly got him appointed.

It would be idle, and quite beyond the scope of these reminiscences, to dwell at any length on a solemnity which is present to the memory of so many of us. Nevertheless, to an Englishman whose fate had been cast abroad since early youth the sight of London at this time, and the spirit animating the vast crowds that thronged its streets, conveyed many a valuable and satisfactory lesson. The Jubilee, it is now generally admitted, gave open expression, for the first time, to those Imperialist sentiments which had been growing apace—though more or less unheeded, or ill-understood—throughout the component parts of the Queen's world-wide dominions, and it thenceforth made the Queen, as has been well said, the living

symbol of British unity, and of the great Imperialist movement to which the South African war was later on to lend additional force and impetus.

We were fortunate in seeing to the best advantage most of the festivities and official functions that took place during this memorable season. As for the splendid and impressive thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey, we had, from the places allotted to us in a gallery immediately above the Royal estrade, a much better view of the ceremony and the principal personages concerned in it than we obtained of the recent Coronation from the more dignified Choir stalls reserved for the Foreign Ambassadors and Envoys and the Privy Councillors. At this crowning moment of her reign, which the aged Sovereign had, it is said, so much dreaded as an ordeal beyond her powers, the Queen's countenance bore, as far as one could judge, an aspect of mild and perfect serenity which was well expressed in the reply she is reported to have afterwards made to the Duchess of Cambridge's anxious inquiries: "I am very tired, but very happy." The touching central figure of the great Queen, who, although so small in stature, bore herself with such incomparable grace and dignity; the splendid group of Princes who surrounded her, so conspicuous among whom was the knightly presence of her son-in-law, even then doomed to a cruel and pathetic fate; and the extreme beauty of the music (far more effective it seems to me than that performed at the late Coronation) were what impressed one most in this historic scene with all its splendid accompaniments.

In spite of the fairly good arrangements made for the carriages, we had to walk a long way before we found ours, and so reached the Borthwicks in Piccadilly too late to see the State procession go by. We

returned there in the evening on foot without difficulty for the illuminations, which were really fine of their kind, Piccadilly being a perfect blaze of light. No doubt the most striking features of the whole day were the admirable temper and behaviour of the masses which filled the great thoroughfares from side to side, and were admirably regulated into two streams coming and going. The huge town with its millions, in unwonted festal garb, and in the most brilliant weather imaginable, bore so different an appearance to its every day, mostly unlovely, aspect as to be well-nigh unrecognisable. The series of great receptions held at the Foreign Office and the India Office, as well as the State Balls at Court, seemed to me, too, unusually magnificent. There was also a delightful garden-party at Buckingham Palace, and a splendid ball given by Lord Rosebery at Lansdowne House, where the number of Royalties gathered together was so great that it reminded me of the descriptions I had, in my boyhood, heard from my aunts of the Congress of Vienna. In this crowd of illustrious personages I remember being struck by the appearance of the late Queen of the Belgians, who, without any special good looks, attracted attention by her *grand air* and dignity. Another to me interesting recollection of this period was a party given by Countess Karolyi—fairest and most popular of London ambassadresses—at the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Belgrave Square in honour of the Crown Prince Rudolf. It was the only time I ever met this rarely-gifted but ill-fated Prince, the mystery of whose terrible end still remained the subject of endless speculation at Vienna when I went there seven years after the date of the sombre tragedy.

At a man's dinner at Lord Derby's early in July I

made the acquaintance of the late Sir John Pender, and was pressed by him to join, with my wife, a party of guests whom the Eastern Telegraph Company had invited to see the Jubilee Naval Review from the cable-laying ships belonging to them. We were taken down to Portsmouth in special carriages on the 22nd, the large party comprising among others the late Lady Galloway, Lady Jersey, Lord and Lady Tweeddale, the German Ambassador, Count Münster and his daughter Comtesse Marie, Lord Derby, Lord Wolseley, Mr. Maurice de Bunsen, Mr. Davidson of the Foreign Office, the Pauncefotes, &c. The numerous guests were divided between the *Mirror* and the *Electra*—both fitted up as luxuriously as private yachts—we being told off to the latter vessel where Lord and Lady Tweeddale acted as hosts, and where nothing could exceed the comfort of the arrangements made by the Company for their visitors. What with the glorious weather; the imposing sight of the great fleet drawn up in interminable lines—most effective, I remember, were the big white hulls of the old troopships, long since, I believe, done away with—and the indescribable stir and movement on the gleaming waters, as countless steamers, their decks piled with holiday folk, came in and took up their berths for the review, I can imagine no more delightful outing than was this one in every way. After the grand pageant of the review itself, and the brilliant illumination of the ships at night, we steamed the next day up and down through the lines, and on Monday were taken round the Isle of Wight and landed in the afternoon at Southampton. Going up to town in the same carriage as Count Münster, whose habits and sympathies made him almost an Englishman, I recollect his expatiating, as we sped through Hampshire, on the extraordinary

luxuriance of our English foliage, and his remarking that, tree for tree, he felt certain that, if the leaves upon them could be counted, an English oak or beech would be found to bear a much greater number than any such tree of the same size growing on the Continent.

Before leaving England on the 22nd of September we stayed a few days with the Falbes at Luton Hoo, where there was a small party that deserves mention as including a few of the people best known in London society in those days. Besides Lady Cork and Lord and Lady Coke, we found Lady Charles Beresford, Sir W. Gordon Cumming, Colonel Oliver Montagu,<sup>1</sup> Henry Calcraft and Alfred Montgomery. Oliver Montagu was perhaps the most popular officer of the Household Brigade of his time, while Calcraft, familiarly known as the hangman, was a bright light of the Treasury, and one of the last *causeurs* of the older caustic school of Bernal Osborne, Quin and others. As for dear old Alfred Montgomery, then in his seventy-fourth year, with his great experience of the world, his charming looks, exquisite manners, and a slight, engaging stutter, he had been for half a century the pet of all that was best in London, and when lying on his death-bed a few years later, almost his last visitors were their present Majesties. Such types as these have, it seems to me, almost disappeared with the last century. An incident of this Luton party, I remember, was the *baccarat* played one evening with unpleasantly heavy losses to some of those who took part in it. An exciting but purely gambling game *baccarat*, though scarcely more disastrous in its results, I fancy, than the bridge which one

<sup>1</sup> A younger brother of Lord Sandwich, and then in command of the Royal Horse Guards.

hears of as being played in certain houses at the present day.

The only other visit we paid was to Petworth, meeting at this great house, celebrated for its splendid gallery of pictures and wonderful Grinling Gibbons carvings, the late Lord Inchiquin and his wife. We had two of our boys with us, and were made very welcome by Lord Leconfield, another perfect specimen of the fast vanishing *gentilshommes de la vieille roche*, who has only lately left us, and by our kind and charming hostess, both very old friends of my wife.

At Marseilles we took the Messageries steamer *Mendoza*, and were fortunate in having for a fellow-passenger M. de Moüy's successor, Comte de Montholon, who happened to be an old Berne acquaintance of mine. Prince Henri d'Orléans was also on board, on his way to Constantinople and the East. We all had our meals at the Commandant's table, and it was not a little amusing to watch the stiff, distant manner which the representative of the Republic—himself of course a Bonapartist by family tradition, and, as it happened, curiously like the Emperor Napoleon the Third—thought it right to assume towards the Orleans Prince. It was the only occasion on which I came across this young scion of the *branche cadette*, who subsequently distinguished himself by his adventurous journeys in Extreme Asia, and acquired less enviable notoriety through his inordinate Anglophobia.

On our return to Athens we were fully prepared to settle down there for the winter with an almost entirely new set of colleagues. My friend Brincken had been transferred to Copenhagen and the Trauttenbergs to Berne, and had been replaced by M. Le Maistre at the German, and Baron Kosjek at the Austro-Hungarian Legation. A very pleasant addition had been made to

the Russian Legation in the Katkoffs. Mme. Katkoff, *née* Princess Lobanow Rostowski and a niece of my Russian sister-in-law, was a sort of connection of mine, and we saw a good deal of her. Like her aunt, she was a very accomplished woman and an admirable pianist, and has since, as the wife of Sir Edwin Egerton,<sup>1</sup> done wonders for the native school of needle-work and art-embroidery at Athens. Our own Legation staff, too, had undergone a complete change. Frank Carew had left us for the Embassy at Paris, and Mr. W. D. Haggard (now H.M. Minister at Buenos Ayres) joined as First Secretary. The friendly, hearty Haggard and his wife, who is gifted with a lovely voice, were a welcome addition to the Legation, which now also included Mr. Ernest Lehmann—a brother, I believe, of the composer of the melodious “Persian Garden”—who did not continue long in the Diplomatic Service.

The chief event of this autumn was the arrival of the *Dreadnought*, Captain Stephenson,<sup>2</sup> with Prince George, who came on a visit to his uncle the King. Prince Louis of Battenberg, whom I had scarcely met since he came to Buenos Ayres in the *Bacchante*, was also on board. We were asked to a luncheon at Tatoi given for the officers of the *Dreadnought*, and thus had another opportunity of seeing something of the delightfully simple country life led by the Royal Family in their rural home, which we found greatly improved since our first visit to it eighteen months before. Prince George was as great a favourite with his Royal relatives as he was popular throughout the squadron.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edwin Egerton, who has just been appointed H.M. Ambassador at Rome, was Minister at Athens for more than twelve years.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Sir Henry F. Stephenson, G.C.V.O., now Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.



He was soon afterwards transferred to the flag-ship, the *Alexandra*, where my son George, to whom he showed much kindness, was midshipman of his watch.

An unexpected turn now took place in my affairs. During my short visit to England in the summer of the preceding year I had made the acquaintance of the late Mr. Cordery, then Resident at Hyderabad, and, in talking over my Indian business with him, had been led to hope that I might perhaps achieve something in the matter of my claims by going out to Hyderabad myself. Subsequent correspondence confirming me in this view, I asked Lord Salisbury to give me leave to make the attempt. To this he kindly agreed, and at the same time apprised me that he had submitted my name to the Queen as eventual successor to Sir William Stuart, who was about to retire from The Hague. The move, I was however told, would not take place for some months to come. The future outlook being thus entirely changed for us, we at once made ready for a journey to India in strictly light marching order, having been strongly advised to take no European servants with us.

## CHAPTER IX

### ATHENS, 1887-1888—A GLIMPSE OF INDIA

WE left the Piræus for Alexandria on the 26th of November in a steamer of the Khedivial line, and had a good tossing, which quite upset, among others, one of our fellow-passengers, the gallant General Vosseur, who, having done with his task of Greek military re-organisation, was going to have a look at the Pyramids before returning home. At Alexandria the Consul-General, Sir Charles Cookson, obligingly looked after us, and quite late in the evening we reached Cairo, where we were welcomed by General Grenfell's A.D.C., Captain Maxwell,<sup>1</sup> and taken to the home which the Sirdar and his bright, clever wife, an old friend of ours, had made for themselves in a lovely old Arab house, the Maison Ali Fehmi. At a dinner, followed by an evening party, which the Grenfells gave the next day, we met that greatest of living British Administrators, Sir Evelyn Baring<sup>2</sup> and his wife, the Egyptian Premier, Nubar Pasha, General Sir F. Stephenson, then in command of the army of occupation, Sir Edgar Vincent, Lord and Lady Dunmore, and the best part of the Cairo world. We devoted the next two days to the Pyramids, the citadel and the bazaars, and then took the train to Suez, arriving there after dark on the 1st of December. A wretched, over-crowded steam-launch carried us a long way out

<sup>1</sup> Now Colonel Sir J. G. Maxwell, K.C.B., at one time Governor of Omdurman.

<sup>2</sup> Now Earl of Cromer.

to the s.s. *Siam*—a vessel of very moderate dimensions as compared with the leviathans in which the P. & O. Co. now convey their passengers—but which much impressed us, I remember, by its brilliant electric lighting, a luxury at that time but little known on board ship. Of the numerous passengers going like ourselves to Bombay I can only recall the lively wife of one of the Judges of the High Court, a Civil Commissioner of one of the Bengal Provinces and his family, and a very full assortment of newly-married couples India-bound.

On the 13th we reached Bombay, where Lord Reay, to whom I had given notice of our journey, sent to meet us the two native servants he had very kindly engaged for us, together with an invitation to come up at once to Government House at Malabar Point. We found the Governor and Lady Reay on the point of starting on an official tour through the Presidency, but they insisted on our accompanying them as far as the ancient city of Ahmedabad, which, being rather off the beat of the ordinary globe-trotter, is comparatively unknown, although for the splendour of its mosques and other buildings it deserves almost to rank with Agra or Delhi. We travelled through the night in the Governor's special train, and, drawing up at the station at nine o'clock in the morning, were straightway ushered into all the pomp and circumstance of Indian public life. The station, red-carpeted and profusely beflagged and decorated with rich hangings, was thronged with a variegated crowd of European and native officials *en grand gala*. A guard of honour was mounted, and we steamed in to the strains of the National Anthem; Lord Reay being received by the Municipal Council with an address of welcome to which he replied in an excellently worded speech.

Only here and there did its intonation slightly recall the earlier surroundings of the distinguished peer and statesman whose curious lot it has been, after first entering official life as Attaché to the Dutch Legation in London, to attain finally so conspicuous a position in the public and intellectual life of the country of his ancestors. From the station we were driven, barbarically bedecked with sweet-smelling garlands of honour, in open carriages, with a brilliant cavalry escort, through the marvellously picturesque old city, rendered a bewildering mass of colour by the brightly clad, many-hued crowds that covered every inch of ground, clustered on the flat house-tops, the walls and parapets of the ancient structures, and availed themselves of every possible coign of vantage. The hurried glimpse we had had of beautiful Bombay, and this progress along the streets of what had been the chief city of Western India and the capital of one of its oldest dynasties, afforded us a most dazzling introduction to the splendours of our Eastern realm. No more overpowering impression can well be conceived.

From the outskirts of the populous city a drive of some three miles on a thickly-planted road, under over-arching trees alive with parrots and big monkeys, brought us to the Governor's camp, the tents of which were pitched round a curious old building—once a hunting-lodge of the Emperor Aurungzebe—where quarters had been prepared for Lord and Lady Reay with their staff and guests. When I looked out, early the next day, and saw before me, in the yellow morning light, the wide but shallow stream of the Sabarmuttee river forded by strings of natives with buffalo-carts and pack-horses, the typically Indian colouring and grouping of the bright picture somehow seemed strangely familiar to me, and I once more experienced

the sensation I have recounted elsewhere as produced upon me some twenty-eight years before at first sight of the tropical vegetation and aspect of Point de Galle<sup>1</sup> in Ceylon. It was as though a curtain had suddenly been lifted in some remote corner of my memory; the explanation no doubt being that amidst similar scenes I had been born, and had lived as a child a few brief years, before being sent home by my widowed father.

During the two days we passed at Ahmedabad we were taken a round of the most notable architectural wonders in which the place abounds. We saw the Jumma Masjid with its many cupolas and royal tombs, said to be one of the most beautiful mosques in the East; the dainty Queen's Mosque or Rani Masjid; the strange Jain temple outside the town; the tomb of Shah Alam, with its adjoining great tank or reservoir; and loveliest of all, the lace-like stone tracery of the windows of an ancient palace which has now been turned into a jail. Then came, as a last sight, the elaborate and most interesting ceremonial of a great Durbar held by the Governor and attended by the Maharajah of Idar and numerous other Guzerat princes and chiefs. We took leave of our kind hosts immediately after this function, reaching our destination at Hyderabad on the afternoon of the 18th of December. Here we were met by Major Gilchrist, the Military Secretary to Mr. Cordery, whose guests we were invited to be at the palatial British Residency at Chudderghaut.

Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention bestowed on us during the seven weeks we were under his roof by that able and distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, the Resident. But for indifferent

<sup>1</sup> See "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. ii. p. 4.

health and other causes, Mr. Cordery must have risen yet higher, and have borne out, as an Indian Administrator, the brilliant promise of his University career. The Resident was a man of many accomplishments, and among other things a great classical scholar and the author of a remarkable version of the *Iliad*. Although his instructions precluded his affording me any official support in the business which brought me to India, I owe his memory a real debt of gratitude for the moral backing, so to speak, and the valuable advice he gave me throughout the arduous task in which I was engaged. Nor must I—leaving entirely aside the negotiations I had to carry on—omit to put on record my sense of the great courtesy and consideration shown to us by H.H. the Nizam himself, and by his Ministers, during our stay at Hyderabad.

Altogether this visit to the scene of my unfortunate father's fruitless exertions, and of his premature and almost tragical end,<sup>1</sup> was a unique and deeply interesting experience in a life of many vicissitudes. In my case a very sad family history attached to Hyderabad. My father was buried in the cemetery in the Residency grounds, and the big house in which he and my mother had lived—now turned into a college for young natives of distinction—still went by the name of the Rumbold Kothi. Here, in the old days I had been told of, had been the centre of such society as then existed, "causing," as the then Governor-General, Lord Hastings (my mother's guardian), put it, "offence" to the newly-appointed Resident, Mr. (afterwards Sir

<sup>1</sup> He was found dead in his bed on the morning of August 24, 1833, in his forty-sixth year. The Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, in apprising the Duke of Devonshire of the event, wrote: "I am induced to address you as one of poor Sir W. Rumbold's best friends. The loss of the warm, kind-hearted man to the cause to which he had devoted such incessant anxiety and labour will be irreparable."

Charles) Metcalfe, "by throwing him somewhat in the shade." At a distance of more than half a century I found myself treading ground made familiar to me from childhood by the story I had repeatedly heard of the ruin of Palmer & Co., and the great wrong inflicted on that House by that same Resident, Sir Charles Metcalfe.

It so happened that, some ten years before, I had, by a singular chance, acquired irrefutable testimony of the injury then done to my father and his descendants by that very eminent official. Quite by accident I learned in 1877 that Sir John Macpherson Macleod, who had been sent to Hyderabad in 1835 to arbitrate upon the outstanding claims of the House of Palmer and Co. after its failure, was still living in London at a very advanced age. I sought him out at his house in Stanhope Street, Victoria Gate, and, although in extremely feeble health, he at once received me on hearing my name. The intellect of the wellnigh nonagenarian who, together with Macaulay, had drawn up the Indian Criminal Code, and had been made a Privy Councillor and a K.C.S.I. for his services, still shone as brightly as ever in the frailest of tenements. He was eager to assist me in the prosecution of the claims. The story he told me, or rather confirmed to me, was that, after giving his award in favour of the trustees of the ruined House in a large claim against a powerful subject of the Nizam,<sup>1</sup> he had been abruptly and arbitrarily withdrawn from Hyderabad, when about to inquire into and deal with other equally well-founded claims of the Firm against certain Hyderabad subjects and the Nizam's Government itself, by Sir Charles Metcalfe, who, after being the main author of the downfall

<sup>1</sup> The Nawab Moonceer ool Moolk ; out of the proceeds of this award a settlement was effected with the creditors of the Firm.

of Palmer & Co., was at that time acting as Governor-General between the departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of his successor Lord Auckland. On my mentioning at the India Office what Sir John had said to me, Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State, commissioned the Permanent Under Secretary, Sir Louis Mallet—who proved the kindest of friends to me in all this business—to see Sir John, who told him in so many words that, in his opinion, the responsibility for the irreparable mischief originally wrought rested far more with the then Government of India than with that of the Nizam.

But I have been led away at undue length into this digression about affairs which have darkened the history of my family for three generations, and must turn to the more cheerful aspects of our stay at Hyderabad. Our host, Mr. Cordery, carried the traditional hospitality of our great Indian officials to its fullest lengths. Among the numerous visitors he entertained during our stay under his roof were Sir Howard and Lady Elphinstone, Miss Bradley, niece of the Dean of Westminster, Professor Jex Blake, with his wife and their distinguished daughter, and Duke Ernest Günther of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustenburg, brother of the German Empress, who was on a sporting tour in India, and arrived at the Residency almost at the same time as ourselves. We did the wonderful arms' and other bazaars together, went to see the tombs and the ancient fort of Golconda, and were taken to a cheetah hunt, which my wife and I went through the novel experience of following on the back of an elephant. It was Christmas-tide, and on Christmas Eve I joined the Duke and his companions, Baron von Leipziger, of the Prussian Gardes du Corps, and Professor Friedrich, in their rooms at the Residency,



where they had lighted up a diminutive *Christbaum* (really a dwarf palm), and, over a *Punschbowle*, celebrated the *Weihnachts Fest* in true German fashion, to the melody of familiar old students' ditties sung, I fear, in somewhat doubtful parts.

We were shown very great civility by the Nizam himself, and were asked to lunch and to dine at H.H.'s immense rambling palace in the city, where as many as seven thousand retainers and attendants, including of course the numerous inmates of the Zenana, are said to be housed. A beautiful, open, tent-covered state coach (yellow picked out with blue, something like the Lowther colours) with four handsome blacks was sent, I remember, one morning to fetch my wife, and after luncheon the splendid contents of H.H.'s stables, together with his carriages, performing horses, and fighting rams, were paraded before the young German Prince and ourselves. H.H. Mir Mahbid Ali Khan, who had only recently completed his twenty-first year, could not but impress one favourably by the simple dignity of his manner and his somewhat sad, pensive countenance—marked of course by the Oriental reserve behind which it is given to no European really to penetrate. Small of stature and very slight, he habitually wore well-cut English clothes, only the black cloth cap or fez, with an aigrette, distinguishing him from the ordinary Europeanised members of his suite. Although his hair, which he allowed to grow unusually long, gave him a somewhat effeminate appearance, he was a fine rider and was said to be an excellent shot, and to all outward appearance seemed a worthy ruler of the greatest of our feudatory states. It is both right and satisfactory to add that the reign of this premier native Prince of India has thus far shown a notable record of progress, and in

his personal dealings with me H.H. evinced a liberal and generous spirit.

Among other great houses at which we were entertained, the most splendid was that of the late Mooneer-ool-moolk, the younger son and heir of the well-known Minister, Sir Salar Jung, and a very attractive type of the young Indian grandee. A state banquet he gave at his palace—known as the Barahdari, or “twelve doors”—in honour of Duke Ernest Günther and ourselves, was the embodiment of a fête of the “Arabian Nights.” One wandered through endless apartments of the most original shapes, with profusely gilt walls covered with many-coloured looking-glasses and costly china, the rooms being littered, in true Oriental fashion, with trumpery musical boxes and mechanical figures, but all opening on to a series of inner courts with gardens and great tanks and fountains brilliantly illuminated. The owner, who spoke English perfectly, and had charming manners—but who had already then, it was said, what proved a fatal *penchant* for green *Chartreuse*—had shortly before met, on some tiger-shooting expedition, a young French couple, the Marquis and Marquise de Morès, and had asked them to stay with him as his guests at Hyderabad. M. de Morès was the son of the Duc de Vallombrosa, whom I remembered well when I was a boy in Paris, and who, together with his charming Duchess, *née des Cars*, was so well known some thirty years ago to the English colony at Cannes. Considering that up till a very recent period the great Mussulman city, with its population of nearly half a million, remained one of the most fanatical centres in India—our soldiers from Secunderabad being still strictly prohibited from showing them-

selves in it in uniform for fear of insult and trouble—the experience of Mme. de Morès (an American by birth and very clever and handsome) of life in an Indian palace in the heart of it, was absolutely unique of its kind. Morès himself, then still quite a young man, was, as to physique, an excellent specimen of the high-bred French aristocrat. He was a very good sportsman, had an unusually fine seat on horseback, and distinguished himself, I remember, in the tent-pegging and sheep-cutting at a great Gymkana which was held on the Futteh Maidan under the auspices of Afzur Jung of the Nizam's household, smartest and most active of A.D.C.'s, and at which my wife presented the prizes. Morès, who was unfortunately anything but friendly to England, was said to be absolutely fearless. The stir occasioned later on by his mysterious disappearance, when adventurously exploring the desert to the south of Tunisia, where he had no doubt been murdered by Touareg banditti, and the insinuations made in the extreme French Nationalist press of English complicity in the crime, may still be remembered.

The Hyderabad grandees were certainly well housed. Vikar-ul-Umra, one of the most powerful among them, who afterwards became Prime Minister, was putting the last touches to a splendid palace, on a rise just outside the town commanding a beautiful prospect, which he only lived to inhabit for a few years; and the Minister of the day, the late Sir Asman Jah, owned a very fine mansion in the centre of the town where he dispensed hospitality on a great scale. For barbaric show, however, none of these surpassed the house of an Arab chief, of the name of Ghalib Jung, the furniture of whose state-rooms—chairs, couches, tables, &c.—was of massive gold and silver, some of

it studded with emeralds, and, by the side of these, a monstrous mixture of coloured Bohemian chandeliers and ornaments, musical animals and toys and other dreadful rubbish. Judging by the wasteful display and extravagance of these Indian magnates, the fabled riches of Golconda did not belie their fame.

There was a curious and amusing contrast between the glimpses we got of the life of these great native folk and what we saw of existence in the large British cantonment at Secunderabad only a few miles away. We spent the inside of a week with Mr. Cordery at the Residency bungalow at Bolarum, which stands on high ground not far from the cantonment and its big barracks and lines and immense parade-ground, and we thereby acquired some notion of the round of life, in their distant exile, of the forces which garrison our vast Indian dependency. There seemed to be no lack of amusement among the officers of this body of several thousand men. Polo matches, dinners and dances given by the different regiments, amongst which was the crack 7th Hussars, gaily succeeded each other, and we were present at a very creditable performance of that old stock piece "Dandy Dick" by Secunderabad amateurs. Nor was sociability wanting in the small set of British officials and others who clustered round the Residency at Chudderghaut and its populous bazaar. The Private Secretary to the Nizam at that time, Colonel Marshall, and his handsome wife, did a great deal for the community in the way of entertainment, and there was plenty of quiet dinner-giving by other residents, and among them Dr. and Mrs. Laurie, the able Residency physician, who subsequently made a name for himself by his researches into the effects of anæsthetics. Very interesting are my recollections of the

semi-European home of the Finance Minister, Mehdi Ali, with whom my negotiations were mostly carried on, and whose wife, whom mine saw several times, spoke excellent English, read a great deal, and had all the manners of a refined Englishwoman. Although her family life was evidently a happy one, she confessed to often suffering from its seclusion and restrictions, and longed for greater freedom, and especially the possibility of travelling with her husband and seeing the world she had read about. Syed Hussein Belgrami was another accomplished native gentleman who showed us much attention.

But before closing my recollections of Hyderabad, over which I have lingered too long, I cannot omit mentioning a very old acquaintance whom I quite unexpectedly found settled here, and from whom we received the warmest of welcomes—the wife, namely, of Colonel Nevill, then in command of the Nizam's Regular troops, and daughter of Charles Lever—his eldest daughter “Jack,” the image of her brilliant, inimitable father, and, like him, bubbling over with wit and humour. We spent several delightful evenings at “Nevill's Folley,” and I found Mrs. Nevill's shrewd sense and knowledge of the place and people of real use to me in the business I had in hand. By far my greatest debt in this connection, however, is due to Mr. Alexander Johnstone Dunlop, Assistant Commissioner of Revenue, to whom was entrusted the first inquiry into my claims. Without the friendly countenance of this experienced civilian, who at once took a decided view of the strength of my case in equity, and the justice of my appeal for redress, I must have entirely failed in the object of my journey.

At last, in the first week in February, after wearisome, protracted discussions, the Government made up

their minds to allow me some compensation on the particular claims I was urging, and, terms being agreed upon, a settlement of them was effected and I was able to leave Hyderabad. It was highly characteristic, however, of Oriental methods that the document embodying the compromise on the claims was only brought to me on the morning of my departure, and I actually signed it in a hurry just before leaving the Residency for the railway station. Although for many reasons keen to get back to Europe and my diplomatic duties, I left Hyderabad with much regret. Among my many memories I have preserved a specially bright and distinct vision of that place and of the friends I made there. I often think of the stately Residency with its spacious rooms and broad verandah, the beautiful, restful park in which it stands, and the shade of its grand old trees, over the tops of which, in the brief Indian twilight, the weird flying foxes go circling round and round. Pictures, too, stand out clearly before me of the big eastern city itself, of the motley crowds from every part of India that fill its bazaars and streets, with now and then an elephant or a string of camels forcing its way through the dense throng, or a group of Arab swash-bucklers, armed to the teeth and carrying ancient long-barrelled, brass-inlaid guns—a survival of the fierce old lawless days—passing along with evil looks at the hated Feringhee; and, at the central crossing of the ways, the four tall minarets of the great ornamental domed archway known as the Char Minar that soars high above all the busy stir and life of the Nizam's strikingly picturesque capital.

We had engaged berths in the next steamer homeward bound, but a slight touch of fever that befell my

wife almost immediately after our arrival at Bombay kept us there for ten days as guests of the Reays at Malabar Point, where we were put up in a charming bungalow forming part of the Government House, and standing on the very brink of the cliff, our windows looking straight down some eighty feet into the deep blue waters of the bay beneath. It was a perfectly ideal residence. To the stay occasioned by this temporary indisposition we owe most grateful and pleasant recollections of the Reays and of their staff, which comprised Colonel and Mrs Lyttelton<sup>1</sup> with her sister Miss Stuart Wortley, now Mrs. Firebrace, and Captain Bruce Hamilton,<sup>2</sup> two officers who have since in the hour of need in South Africa done such conspicuous service. Here, too, I first met Sir William Lee-Warner, now a distinguished member of the Council of India. It was the height of the winter season at Bombay, and its principal event was a great Charity Fancy Fair, held in some of those magnificent tents peculiar to India, that had been pitched on the esplanade facing the great public buildings which are deservedly the pride of the beautiful city. Lady Reay, who is one of the most accomplished *maitresses de maison* I have had the good fortune to meet, and a capital organiser at the same time, made a great success of this charitable undertaking, in which the Duchess of Connaught also took a lively interest, and we all laboured hard to assist her, getting scratch meals between whiles at the Secretariat close by. In these few days we indeed came in for a perfect round of festivities, mostly in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-General the Honble. Sir Neville Lyttelton, K.C.B., now Chief of the General Staff of the Army.

<sup>2</sup> Major-General Sir Bruce M. Hamilton, K.C.B.

had gone into camp at Bombay for the winter. There were several big dinners and a great State Ball at Government House, and a brilliant entertainment was given by the Byculla Club. I have scarcely met the Duchess of Connaught since those days, but H.R.H. made upon me a charming impression for which a certain reserve—greatly due to shyness—did not at first prepare one. Once the ice was broken, I found her most agreeable and full of conversation, and evidently highly amused and interested by her Indian experiences and surroundings. Both she and the Duke had made themselves exceedingly popular at Bombay. To us they were most gracious and kind. We dined with them *en petit comité* the evening before our departure; the Duchess, who has a very pretty voice, doing some music with my wife after dinner. Besides these Royalties several other guests of distinction arrived or were entertained at Government House. The Portuguese Governor-General came from Goa on a visit of ceremony, and the Maharajah of Mysore was received one day with the full honours due to him. Most interesting to me was the arrival of the young Duc d'Orléans, then just turned nineteen. H.R.H., accompanied by Colonel de Parseval, was on his way to join a battalion of the Rifle Brigade in the Punjab with which he did duty for some time. The youthful Prince, who is accounted a "*grand charmeur*" by his intimates, was very civil to me, and owing to my French connections, most of whom are among his staunchest adherents, we had many subjects of interest in common. A few years later I had other opportunities of seeing and getting to know more of the exiled head of the "*Maison de France*."

We sailed from Bombay on the 17th of February in the P. & O. s.s. *Verona*, looking back with unmixed



pleasure to all we had seen and enjoyed in India, and, last not least, to the great kindness of our hosts of Malabar Point. By the 2nd of March we were back again in our Greek home, and before long set to work making preparations for our new move, my transfer to The Hague having by this time been officially made known. We did not, however, finally leave Athens for some weeks, during which Victor Montagu,<sup>1</sup> a very old friend of mine, arrived with Lady Agneta, on a visit to their Hellenic Majesties. With the Montagus and Mr. Hamilton Aïdé, who turned up about the same time, we made farewell excursions to our favourite haunts of Pentelicus and Kæsariani, and had our last look at the wonders of the Acropolis. Personally I was loth to leave Greece. The last traces of the troublous period of stress and commotion which I had gone through had now passed away, and I should have been glad to stay on some time longer at my interesting post and watch the progress made by the country under the Tricoupis Administration. Its material condition had already much improved. Public undertakings of great utility had been inaugurated, important railway concessions had been granted, and the remote districts of the Kingdom were in a fair way to be opened up. Above all, the *prestige* of the Crown—temporarily somewhat shaken by the crisis of which I have above given so full an account—had entirely recovered the ground it had lost, while the perfect understanding between the Sovereign and his gifted Minister gave the best of promise for the future. It was indeed a great satisfaction to me to feel, when I took my last leave of the King and Queen at a family luncheon party to which we were asked after I had had an audience to present

<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral the Honble. Victor Montagu.

my letters of recall, that so bright a prospect was opening out for their Majesties, in whose welfare I could not but take the sincerest interest. Very glad, too, was I to know that our Legation would be entrusted to such capable hands as those of my old ally, Sir Edmund Monson.

On Sunday, the 22nd of April, we embarked in the Messageries mail-boat *Amazon*e, at the Piræus, whither we were escorted by a crowd of kind colleagues and friends. As the afternoon wore on and we got abreast of Egina and its lofty summits, we had a parting, far-off view of the famous city "the eye of Greece"—glorious in the past, and still strangely fascinating in the present—the outlines of plain and town and sheltering hills all blurred in the golden flush and haze of the rapidly westering sun. Another chapter, and that not the least interesting, of my diplomatic life had in its turn come to a close.

## CHAPTER X

### THE HAGUE, 1888-1889—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

FROM Marseilles we travelled across to Biarritz and stayed a week with my sister and her husband at the Pavillon La Rochefoucauld, where we found my second son Willie on his Easter holidays from the Military Academy at Woolwich, and also the old Duchesse de La Rochefoucauld. This was destined to be my last visit to my sister in her luxurious home by the blue Gascon gulf. As I write, mournful memories have gathered for me round the spot where she gave us so affectionate a welcome, and where her bright, unbroken spirit so long defied age and infirmity, shedding to the very last gladness around her. Over all that countryside the memory of the "*bonne Comtesse*" will not easily fade away. . . . We reached The Hague on the 6th May. I had never been in Holland before, and it would be difficult to conceive a greater contrast than that between its general aspect and conditions of life and those of the country whence I had just come. At first sight, in the tardy Dutch spring, the cold, grey, stagnant waters bordered by almost leafless trees—which, later on, with their rich summer foliage reflected in placid surfaces, make the "village capital" so attractive a spot—did not give one a very cheerful impression of The Hague. Equally depressing was our first inspection of the old Legation House in the Westeinde, which, like the house at Athens, had been badly looked after

and stood in sore need of thorough repair. We did not linger, however, over these first impressions, but went over for ten days to England, where I had to kiss hands on my appointment and get my credentials. I received a command to dine and sleep at Windsor Castle, and had my audience of the Queen on the 17th. Being in deep mourning for my wife's father, Mr. Crampton, we saw no one, only going on a short visit to Alfred Caulfeild and his wife at Twickenham. We were soon back again in our temporary quarters at the Oude Doelen, a quaint but comfortable hostelry on the Tournooiveld, with a name<sup>1</sup> and traditions that go back to the days when it had been the meeting-place, and had contained the butts, of the ancient guild of burgher marksmen founded in the fifteenth century under the patronage of St. George. The house—whose front bears the date of 1636—stands on the site of a still older building erected on ground originally granted by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Mine host of the Doelen Hotel—a ceremonious Dutchman of somewhat eccentric ways—was most attentive to us, and at his cosy inn we spent nearly the whole summer while the Legation House was being put in order. The sum required for the purpose was advanced me by the Treasury, which repaid itself by annual deductions from my house-rent allowance—a curious arrangement not a little characteristic of that great Department.

Towards the end of August we were at last able to move into the Legation, and even then had to drive out dilatory workmen room by room. Having suffered for some time from acute chronic dyspepsia, the origin of which I trace to immoderate indulgence in iced

<sup>1</sup> Doelen, an obsolete Dutch word for shooting-place.

water and other cooling drinks during the oppressive heat of our first summer at Athens, I had been advised to try the waters of Royat, and accordingly went there alone, breaking the journey in Paris at Edwin Egerton's hospitable rooms in the Rue Jean Goujon. I did not like Royat, and its waters did me no good. Poked down in a narrow valley that affords a level space of at most a few hundred yards for the perambulations of the *baigneurs*, the Auvergnat watering-place produced upon me from the outset an unpleasant sense of being "cabined, cribbed, confined." In that respect it reminded me of Carlsbad, without the redeeming points of that far-famed health resort.

The stuffy little promenade, up and down which one stumped when drinking the waters or waiting for one's bath, was as dull as it was cramped, in spite of the efforts of a feeble band discoursing the typical stock pieces of the French *répertoire*, such as the eternal overture to the "*Cheval de bronze*," or some vapid waltz by Waldteufel. Fortunately Lord Salisbury was here with his family, and, in the mostly commonplace company of visitors, the massive form of the British Premier stood out conspicuously. It was almost the only opportunity I had had of meeting him otherwise than officially, and those who knew him well have not to be told of the kindly charm of his manner. He had, I think, an extraordinarily winning smile, and, seen thus *en villégiature*, he showed no trace of the aloofness with which he has been sometimes charged. As far as I remember there was nothing in those late summer months specially to engage his attention in the domain of foreign affairs, though the dreadful red boxes came and went with their usual regularity, but his talk was always capti-

vating, and he easily won my heart by his kindly references to the work I had had to do in Greece. Much as I disliked Royat I owe the place some thanks for the rare chance it gave me of a passing glimpse into the intimate life of the most united and gifted of families, thereby enabling me to know not only Lord but Lady Salisbury as she really was—clever, agreeable and sympathetic *à ses heures* beyond words—and the very opposite of the impression which a somewhat unfortunate manner too generally gave of her. There were other interesting people besides the Salisburys at Royat at this time. Henry James,<sup>1</sup> a very old friend of mine, was there with his niece, and also Sir John Gorst, then Under Secretary of State for India. With the latter I went longish walks over the hills and through the woods, away from the valley and its closeness, and with the James's I sampled the cookery of the "Gastronome"—an old-fashioned ordinary patronised by the officers of the garrison—in a back street of gloomy old Clermont Ferrand, dreariest, it seemed to me, of French provincial capitals.

I was back at The Hague by the middle of September, having in no way benefited by my cure, and this led to my trying what the then celebrated Amsterdam *masseur* Metzger could do for me. A very clever sketch of Metzger is given in M. Maarten Maartens' last, and otherwise somewhat disappointing, book. The Professor—as he called himself to the great wrath and disgust of the learned Dutch Faculty—was a remarkable instance of the success of self-advertisement and assurance. He unquestionably achieved wonderful results in cases which had defeated the best surgical science, but his phenomenal reputation was not a little

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord James of Hereford.

enhanced by the stories that were current of his cavalier ways towards patients of even the most exalted rank, his almost brutal bluffness of manner, and rough, unsparing humour and sarcasm. The dingy waiting-room at the Amstel Hotel—where, by the way, he made it a point that his patients should stay during his treatment—was a perfect kaleidoscope, so strange was the mixture of persons of all countries and conditions that passed through it. Semi-royalties, artists, great ladies, worn-out ministers, and politicians resignedly sat there waiting for their turn, cheek by jowl with much humbler folk. Presently the Professor would appear in the doorway—a fine, burly figure in a white blouse, with shirt-sleeves half rolled up above the strong hands that kneaded so searchingly, and yet were capable of the softest, almost velvety, touch—and would shout out “*Einsteigen*”!—as they do at German railway stations—together with the name of the next patient, sometimes accompanying it by a bantering apostrophe or *sobriquet*. He would then stride back with his victim along an overheated passage redolent of the sickly smell of cold cream, to the torture chamber, past a row of dressing-rooms, full of more patients who had already been through his hands.

No doubt Metzger did me some, though not lasting, good. His cleverest cure in my time was that of a young good-looking Count von der Gröben, of the German Legation—a connection of the Sidneys of Penshurst—whose right arm had been almost paralysed by a bad fall with his horse. The cruel hands put him all right, but tortured him abominably. Although the roughest, Metzger could be on occasion the kindest and most humane of creatures, and he assuredly had an almost mesmeric influence

over many of his patients. There was, nevertheless, a good deal of charlatanesque *pose* about him, and particularly in his being no respecter of persons. He went out of his way once, it was said, to be unparadonably rude to the beautiful Empress Elizabeth of Austria, which did not prevent another Empress<sup>1</sup>—dethroned alas! and no longer young, but still most *séduisante*—being one of his constant patients. At this time I had an audience of H.M. to which I have referred in the first part of these Reminiscences. A not uninteresting circumstance of the interview was that I was charged for the Empress with a message of respectful sympathy from the Duchesse de Doudeauville, wife of the head of the French Legitimist party, who was likewise staying at the Amstel with her sister-in-law, Princesse Edouard de Ligne.

In what might almost be called the *salon* Metzger I came across an old lady of whose sadly stormy history, which closed shortly afterwards, I had often heard: Lady \* \* \*, at the time of my boyhood in Paris, had been, when a young girl, the innocent object of a scandalous action brought against her father by a rascally Polish doctor, and, after great matrimonial misadventures, had ended by marrying a Belgian of obscure birth with whom, it was said, she lived very happily. Another patient of the great *masseur* was Baron de Goltstein, well known as the successor to Count Bylandt as Dutch Envoy to our Court, who was drowned in so strange a manner by missing his footing in the dark, when crossing a narrow causeway between two shallow ponds in his grounds at Oldenalla, near Utrecht, where we had paid him a visit one

<sup>1</sup> The Empress Eugénie. See "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. p. 163.



summer. At Metzger's, too, I again met our old Stockholm friends, the Hochschilds, who had long retired from the Swedish Foreign Office to their snug country home in Scania. But of all my fellow-patients the one with whom my acquaintance, first made here, was to ripen into friendship was Mrs. C. Labouchere, *née* Munro of Lindertis, who, with that best of good fellows, her husband—a partner in the banking house of Hope & Co.—then lived in a lovely old house on the Heerengracht at Amsterdam, one of the four great canals that wind their stately course through the ancient city—and here we were afterwards more than once their guests.

Wonderful, bustling, and yet half-dreamy Amsterdam! The tall, massive seventeenth-century mansions of the opulent burghers of old that line its more secluded waterways, seem ideal homes of ease and contemplation, and truly fitting habitations for the men and women, in rich dark clothing and beautiful snowy collars and ruffs, who look down upon you so placidly as you pass along the walls of the Rijksmuseum. And hard by these quiet, sleepy backwaters—perfect in all but their too often doubtful exhalations—are to be seen the stir and movement of a great modern town full of active, strenuous lives, still set in the mellow framework of the days when there were abroad in its streets and market-places those wonderful limners who have rendered the features and humours of the queen of Dutch cities with such incomparable force and truth. Indeed so little changed is the outward aspect of the country and people, that, all over Holland, in town and village, you may yet at some corner chance upon a living scene or group that seems taken from the panels of Metzu or Jan Steen.

My cure took me a good deal to Amsterdam this autumn, and, in following years, too, I went there constantly, the curious charm of the intensely picturesque old city growing upon me with each visit. The splendid Rijksmuseum alone would have been an irresistible magnet, but to us it was an endless pleasure simply to wander without any definite object, along the ever-changing ways and winding quays, from the broad open spaces about the Palace of National Industry, to the queer, steamy lanes of the Jewish quarter, the workshops of the diamond-cutters, or the dreary ancient Breestraat where, through eighteen years, poor Rembrandt dwelt and did a giant's work, until, crushed by penury and misfortune, he was finally driven from house and home. I will not say that, after doing justice to M. le Lorrain's excellent *déjeuner de la Bourse* at the Café Riche, there was not a more special attraction for us in a stroll in the busy Kalverstraat, teeming with life and full of fascinating *bric-à-brac* shops. The genuine treasures stowed away in his drawers by old Boazberg for instance, which that greatest character I ever met among the tribe of *antiquaires* made it quite a favour to show one, were in those days, when fraudulent imitations had already spoilt the market, absolutely marvellous. But perhaps the most interesting occupation for the idler at Amsterdam was to watch the first laying of the foundations of some new building. The sight of the great piles being driven, side by side to any depth, by steam-hammers, into the black ooze and slush, made one realise the wonders of this hive of 500,000 souls, all housed in dwellings artificially raised above the swamp, and living "like crows perched on the tops of trees," to quote the ancient jest of Erasmus about them. At my first visit to the great city in 1888 the magnificent

Central Railway Station, on which millions of florins had been spent, was being in great part rebuilt after the serious settlements that had taken place in its foundations two years before. Between the solidity of the Dutchman, and the quaking nature of so much of his soil, there is an almost humorous antithesis that cannot escape one's notice even in a country of which it has been well said that, in every sense, it is quite by itself.

It was ordained that I should hold my post at The Hague for upwards of eight years, and pleasant, peaceful years these were on the whole, until there came the embittering sense of hope deferred, as time went on without bringing the promotion to which I considered myself justly entitled. But on this point I may have more to say further on.

One result of our being left so long at The Hague was, that in many ways it grew into much more of a home to us than had been either Athens or Stockholm. For the first time, too, we were now able to set up a real family centre for our grown-up sons, and to take them all in when away from their several avocations. But for the depressing character of the Dutch climate, with its trying, all-pervading damp, few posts offer greater attractions than The Hague to a British representative content with duties of an interesting though not of an absorbing nature, and disposed to make the most of what has become essentially a *poste d'observation*. For much can be gathered there by carefully watching the big current of international affairs as it flows past the quiet backwater that lies so conveniently near to our own shores. Then again, although Holland has, since the days of Waterloo and of the Belgian revolution that followed so speedily, almost entirely

ceased to have any active concern with the larger European transactions, it remains of course in touch with them. At this moment, indeed, there is perhaps on the map of Europe no spot which might all at once, under given eventualities, become of greater importance to us. The unimpaired independence and neutrality of the Dutch Kingdom, under its time-honoured national dynasty, cannot but be to us a matter of paramount interest, since, in certain given conditions, it is possible, without too great a stretch of the imagination, to conceive of its peaceful harbours serving once more as a base for fleets far more formidable than those which, some two centuries and a half ago, fought with ours for the dominion of the seas—gallant contests of which, in the inner quadrangle of the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam, the great coat-of-arms taken from the stern of the *Royal Charles* to this day remains an unpleasant reminder. There is a good deal for the vigilant diplomatist to watch at The Hague. Such speculations as these, however, may seem to be somewhat outside my present subject, and I will not pursue them further.

The Legation which, as I have said, became for us so attractive a home, fully deserves more particular description, being in some respects the most interesting house I ever occupied in the many changes of my career. It was situated in the old street called West-einde, or, as its name denotes, the western region of the town, whence, contrary to the tendency observable in other capitals, the tide of wealth and fashion had long set in other directions. A serious drawback to it was its position in this very narrow street which leads out of the picturesque but untidy Groenmarkt, with its busy stalls and the rough market folk who crowd the immediate neighbourhood, while the heavy

country carts too often block the way. The dignified old building had in fact been deserted and left by itself in the slums. The arms of Castille carved over the archway or *porte cochère* of the house, marked its purchase, not long after the peace of Münster, by the Spanish Envoy, Don Emanuel de Lyra, who, as well as his successors, lived in it in great state until the end of the eighteenth century, when it was sold, and, after passing through different hands, became the property of the Jesuits, from whom we rented it. Its *façade* had been renewed and many changes made in it by its Spanish owners, but the main structure and the vast basement and cellars beneath it unquestionably formed part of a far older building which had belonged to the patrician family of Assendelft in the middle of the fifteenth century, the house being still traditionally known as the *Assendelfthuis*. Concerning this older house there was a vague and probably unfounded tradition that the ruthless Alva had resided in it, and that the basement aforesaid had been used for sinister purposes by the Inquisition.

The commonplace entrance to the more modern building, up a few steps under the archway, little prepared one for the really fine proportions of the suite of reception rooms on the ground floor, the main feature of which was a beautiful ball-room nearly forty feet square, with a perfect parquet floor, for which, in after years, I would have given a great deal at the wretchedly scamped Embassy House in ball-loving Vienna. Upstairs, above this great apartment, there ran a long dark corridor with a number of good-sized bed-rooms opening into it on either side, some of which we made as bright and liveable as we could, without, however, entirely succeeding in divesting the passage itself of a depressing gloominess for which it was diffi-

cult to account. Vague stories were indeed current of the building being haunted, and the occupants of one room in particular were certainly plagued by vivid nightmares which, through the recurrence in them of the same distinctive features, were singularly akin to spectral visitations. There is, I am told, no doubt that my successor in the house found it advisable to give up using the room in question as a bed-room, and turned it into a box-room. Be this as it may, we were all of us from the first conscious of an undefinable atmosphere of creepiness and mystery pervading the entire rambling building after dark.

I am careful to insist on this point, because it was only towards the end of my tenancy of it that I became aware of the gruesome and thoroughly authentic tradition attaching to the house, and which, had I known it at the outset, would have more than accounted for the uneasy sense of mystery I have spoken of. I am indebted for the story to M. de Riemsdijk, the Director of the State Archives at The Hague, whose wife, by the way, was one of the Loudons, a very charming family of Scotch descent. In his searches in the marvellously rich records under his care, M. de Riemsdijk had come upon the complete evidence of a criminal trial that took place at The Hague in the middle of the sixteenth century, and was closely connected with the *Assendelfhuis*. The owner of the house at that period was one Gerard van Assendelft, an eminent magistrate and President of the High Court of Holland under the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Assendelft, presumably a man of mature age, had married a French lady of good family in Touraine younger than himself. One can imagine the lively Catherine de Chessoir—brought from the sunny banks of the Loire to a sombre manor-house in the mists of Holland, and subjected to

the rigid rule of a Dutch household conducted with all the national regard for due economy—soon evincing a rebellious spirit. The union turned out far from happily; but the device resorted to by Catherine to procure means when her supplies were stopped, was not a little strange. She imported from her own country two “young fellows” (*gesellen*), who were experts “in the art of coining,” and furnished them with the “stamps, implements and materials” required for making false money, which she issued surreptitiously, at the same time “clipping the gold and silver coin of the realm, to the detriment of the dignity of His Imperial Majesty and the common welfare.”<sup>1</sup> The unfortunate woman was tried with her accomplices, and, having confessed to the crime, “under pain (torture) and iron bands,” was sentenced to be burnt to death, and all her goods confiscated to the Emperor. Her fellow-culprits were publicly beheaded, but, by special mercy of the Queen of Hungary, then Regent of the Netherlands for her brother the Emperor, Catherine’s sentence was commuted—no doubt in consideration of the high station of the Assendelfts—to private execution in prison and burial in consecrated ground. The wretched creature had been taken, when arrested, to the grim old jail well known to visitors to The Hague as the *Gevangenpoort*—the walls of which have many another dark tale to tell—and here, in April 1540, she was barbarously and ignominiously put to death by drowning, her head being forcibly held down in a pail of water.

In exploring—for such was their labyrinthine character and massive structure—the vaulted cellars of the old building, where a bricked-up door marked

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the quaint old Dutch of the sentence passed by the High Court.

the entrance to a subterranean passage leading, it was said, to the Groote Kerk a few hundred yards away, one could not help speculating whether they had been made use of by the ill-fated Catherine in her foolishly wicked venture. That the memories of her misdeeds and miserable end hovered about the house, and gave it the indescribable tinge of latent sadness and secrecy we all noticed in it, I will not assert, and, by asserting, expose myself to just derision. We are all of us, however, more or less ready to grant that stone walls somehow keep the impress of things they have witnessed. For that matter, are not our homes coloured, if not haunted, by our own lives and the lives of those before us? There had unquestionably been tangible traces of a mystery about the house in the Westeinde, for not many years before, on what I would call its redeeming garden-side, a skull and a few bones had been dug up—possibly those of some obscure agent in Catherine van Assendelft's sordid little tragedy.

Its garden-side was indeed the redeeming feature of the fine uncanny old building. The original manor-house had stood on the outskirts of the town, in spacious grounds which successive sales on change of ownership had by degrees curtailed. Its worst devastators had been the Jesuit fathers who, on a great slice of the property, had built, in the early forties of last century, a big church, the high, dead wall of which formed the western boundary of what garden was left to us, and took from us half our sunshine. The effect of conventual peace and seclusion which the overshadowing wall, the subdued peal of the organ and the chant of the faithful behind it, imparted to our pleasaunce, was not without its charm. The grass on our lawn grew lush; the tall tops of the lovely elms—beneath which the guilty Frenchwoman



may have sat and dreamed of her fair country far away—swayed in the evening breezes, gently rocking the nests of cawing rooks, and, in the summer nights, now and then sheltering a stray nightingale; what few flowers we had seemed all the brighter and sweeter for their rarity; and as the hours sped away they were marked by the chimes from the gaunt bell-tower of the Groote Kerk close by—varied by the sweetly quaint *carillon* which, all over the Low Countries, sends, from many a grey town and market-place, its dreamy message through the land. We loved our garden, even though the trying Dutch climate robbed us of much of the enjoyment of it.

I remained so long at The Hague that the staff of the Legation was several times entirely renewed during my stay there. On arriving I found as First Secretary my former colleague at Florence, Mr. Fenton, who had served here sixteen years, having several times declined promotion rather than leave a place he knew and liked so well. His experience of the country and people, which he unreservedly placed at my service, was of the greatest use to me. Dear old Fenton!—spending the peaceful evening of his days in retirement in a snug little house in the *Praktizijnshoek*—almost the last specimen left of a school of diplomacy more formal and precise than that which obtains in these days, but which was scarcely less efficient. I found, too, at the Legation Vincent Corbett, who has in recent years made his mark in Greece and Egypt, and Alan Johnstone, now Councillor of Embassy at Vienna, but who that summer, as a true Yorkshireman, was successfully running his good horse “Moscow” at the Clingendael races.

And here the mention of Clingendaal—prettiest and most enjoyable of Dutch country places, with its bright gardens and beautiful grounds, its admirably appointed house, its race-course and golf-links—evokes in me the saddest memories. I had known its charming, capable mistress from her childhood. Her parents, the Vincent de Tuylls, were constant frequenters of Baden-Baden and Nice in long bygone days which I remember so well. One of my earlier recollections of her was escorting her—then a perfectly lovely girl of seventeen—together with “Jacob Omnium,” the father of Mr. H. V. Higgins, from Nice to Paris, as I have said elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Almost immediately afterwards she had married Baron Arnaud de Brienens, one of the greatest landowners in Holland, and when, long after, I was appointed to that country, she was the mother—quite a case of *mater pulchrior*—of the young ladies who for years, with herself, were so thoroughly at home and so popular in London society. In less than a twelvemonth both she and her husband, the kindest of friends to me, have now gone, and, with them, her brother and next-door neighbour at Oosterbeck, Baron Reginald de Tuyll, another highly valued friend of mine. That cheeriest, most hospitable corner of the whole pleasant Hague country-side knows them no more. Only by those who remember what a centre Clingendaal was for so long to both the native and the foreign society of The Hague, can the void caused by the death of its owners be truly realised.

Misfortune in another shape has also, in the last few years, befallen the hospitable Oudermeulens, who, next to the Brienens, were the wealthiest people in the most exclusive set at The Hague, and saw

<sup>1</sup> See “Further Recollections of a Diplomatist,” pp. 160-61.

many people both at their fine old house in the Kneuterdijk and at a big *château* in the French style they had built on their estate of Oud Wassenaer on the road to Leyden. One venerable couple who likewise received a great deal deserve special mention — Baron Verschuier and his wife. The Baron was close upon ninety when I left The Hague in 1896, and only died some four years afterwards, being very soon followed by his wife, who was at least ten years his junior. For his age he was, I think, physically the most surprising man I ever met, standing six foot three or four in his stockings, and to the last being as straight as an arrow. He was one of the very few who might in their childhood have remembered the days at Amsterdam of well-intentioned King Louis and flighty Queen Hortense, and, as a young officer, he had served under Chassé in the splendid defence made by the Dutch during the Belgian revolution. He and his wife, an Amsterdam heiress, celebrated their diamond wedding shortly after we got to The Hague. Up till the end this indestructible couple continued to entertain at a house in the Voorhout, which was remarkable for its fine carved oak panellings, and had been for many years the residence of one of my predecessors, Sir Edward Disbrowe, being mentioned in the interesting reminiscences lately published by his daughter.<sup>1</sup> Madame Verschuier's *salon* and her stage-box at the theatre were the very centre of the gossip and tittle-tattle in which society in the Dutch capital, as elsewhere, not a little indulged. There was too in those days a dear old American lady who was a kinswoman of John Jacob, the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Disbrowe died in this house in October 1851. It had been occupied before by Lord Clancarty, as Ambassador to the Netherlands.

founder of the Astor dynasty, and the widow of one of the Boreels who had been Dutch Minister in Paris. She lived the greater part of the year in a bright, comfortable house in the Bezuidenhout where she gave excellent little dinners, spending her winters on the *côte d'azur*. She and her two daughters, Baronne de Pallandt van Neerijnen and Baronne de Groeninx van Zoelen, were among our best friends, and they too have all passed away since then. The gaps in society at The Hague in the last few years have indeed been unusually great.

The Dutch are an eminently sociable people much given to hospitality, and in the winter season dinners and parties were plentiful at The Hague. Although but few families of the somewhat exclusive aristocracy could be said to have large fortunes, they have all been trained for generations to careful habits, and seldom live up to their incomes. Thus, while eschewing as a rule all idle show and display, they are in far better circumstances than many of their congeners in larger and richer communities. The same feature is noticeable in the different grades of Dutch society, so that the average of substantial well-being throughout the upper and middle classes is probably higher in Holland than in most countries. The solid, unostentatious comfort of their homes is not to be exceeded. In the dignified patrician houses on the Lange Voorhout, the Prinsegracht, and Heerengracht—the finest of which by the way are mementoes of persecution, having been originally built by the Sephardim Jews who were driven out of Portugal by Pombal—rich heirlooms in pictures, antique furniture, rare Delft and Chinese ware abound, but their owners live in them in perfectly simple, unpretentious fashion.

There is of course a gay set in The Hague world, and scarcely any society I have lived in can show a greater proportion of nice-looking, well-dressed, and at the same time intelligent, highly cultivated women. The subscription balls given by a very select club—a sort of Dutch Almack's—known as the *Société du Casino*, in the rooms of the Oude Doelen Hotel, were some of the best functions of their kind I can remember seeing anywhere. The pretty daughters of Countess Limburg Stirum, handsome Mlle. Sarah de Pallandt, and the *séduisante* Mlle. Kiline Nepveu of the perfect figure, among others, would have been admired even in a room full of London beauties.

That constantly fluctuating quantity, the Diplomatic Corps, contained many pleasant elements, renewed at intervals during our long stay in Holland. Of our former Italian colleague at Stockholm, the Marquis Spinola and his family, I have spoken before. The German Minister, when I first arrived, was the late Baron Saurma, afterwards Ambassador at Constantinople, a friendly type of the North German *junker*, whom I chiefly remember in connection with an excursion he induced me to make with him across the German frontier, in the summer of 1889. The object of the trip was a visit to the splendid old church of St. Victor, at Xanten, on the Lower Rhine, which is said to be one of the most ancient towns in Germany, and the traditional birthplace of Siegfried of the Nibelungen. At the frontier fortress of Wesel we put up at a moderate inn much frequented by the officers of the garrison, and the next day went to see this perfect gem of mediæval architecture which, with its beautiful twin spires and grand proportions,

seems to have been, as it were, left stranded in the shrunk, decayed little place that drowns in its shadow. Even the most fervent of Wagnerians would be hard put to it to find any trace of romance or poetry in the fabled cradle of the dragon-slayer as it is to be seen at present. We went on the next day to Cleves, whence came the poor lady whom our royal Bluebeard so coarsely dubbed "a Flemish mare," and whose uncomely head—so much did he dislike her—he possibly deemed unworthy even of the headman's axe. But we were in the Nibelungen country and little concerned in the fate of the ill-favoured Anne. In the castle in which she was born there stands on high the *Schwanenthurm*, the tower of Lohengrin. From its battlements the prospect stretches away over the broad valley where—its course having ages ago been diverted—the Rhine, alas for Lohengrin! now flows and glitters a long distance away, which is somewhat detrimental to the *mise en scène*, inasmuch as it is distressing to imagine the son of Parsifal steering his fairy skiff up to the castle of the persecuted Elsa along the mean little water-course which alone now marks the former bed of Father Rhine. It is curious that traditions of descent from the *Schwanenritter* subsist in the very ancient Dutch house of Pallandt. Baron "Dop" Pallandt van Neerijnen, the husband of the lady I have mentioned above, once showed me a very old pedigree in which there figured, in the tenth century, a knight of the swan with *armes parlantes* to match. The neighbourhood of Cleves, with gentle, verdant hills and hanging woods, is exceedingly attractive, and has become a favourite health resort for the Dutch from across the border.

Ancient Nimwegen, the next stage on our return to The Hague, took us still further up the tide of cen-

turies to Carolingian days, for here, dominating the sluggish Waal, stands the Valkburg, with scanty ruins of the palace stronghold of Charlemagne. But I was to see Nimwegen, and all the pleasant Gelderland, in quite different company a few years later.

I must return, however, to my other colleagues from whom I have allowed myself to stray too far. We found at the Russian Legation Count Pierre Kapnist and his wife—the latter as nice and pleasing as she was delicate—with whom we soon became great friends. I had known all Countess Kapnist's people at St. Petersburg, her mother, Countess Stenbock Fermor, being the elder sister of Princess Soltikow, whom I remembered as one of the most attractive of Russian ladies, and of the beautiful Princess Mary Dolgorouki. For my part I early acquired a real regard for Count Kapnist, which was further strengthened at Vienna, where we were again colleagues later on. Placed there, as every representative of his country must be, in a position of great delicacy, having regard to the tendency of the Slav elements in Austria to look for Russian countenance and support, he showed remarkable tact and judgment, and acquired the full confidence of the Imperial Government to which he was accredited. I know no straighter or more high-minded diplomatist than Count Kapnist, who has not a little contributed to the smooth working of the valuable understanding arrived at between Vienna and St. Petersburg in Balkanic affairs. But, in touching on this subject, I am in some degree anticipating.<sup>1</sup> With the Kapnists, I remember, we spent a very plea-

<sup>1</sup> The above had only just been written when the news came of the almost sudden death of my much valued friend and colleague. The official messages exchanged on the occasion between Vienna and St. Petersburg more than confirm what I have said above.

sant day at Leyden in June 1890, on the occasion of one of the quinquennial celebrations of the foundation of that ancient University. We engaged rooms at the Hotel Levedag in the main street, and from its windows watched the humours of the Dutch crowd, the town being full to overflowing for the historical procession of the students representing Charles V. and his court. Some of the costumes and the armour were really fine, it being a point of honour in the best Dutch families to rig out their sons for these functions with becoming splendour; but the *cortège* was badly marshalled and came past in straggling detachments. It was a pretty sight, nevertheless, and interesting to me as the first I saw of these pageants for which the Low Countries have been celebrated from time immemorial, though on this occasion the great Emperor was not surrounded, as in the great picture of his entry into Antwerp, by the Vienna painter Makart, by groups of lovely creatures in striking disarray.

Our *doyen* at The Hague was the Belgian Envoy, Baron d'Anethan, with whom I was on the most cordial terms, and who served afterwards for many years in a like capacity at Paris, where he is now living in well-earned retirement. The Austro-Hungarian Envoy at this time was Baron de Walterskirchen, both he and his wife being very old friends of mine. With the latter, when she was Countess Lili Húnyadi, I had had many a *fixe Tanz* in my Vienna dancing days. Walterskirchen, one of the cheery lot whom the Metternichs had gathered round them at their brilliant Embassy in Paris, entered upon his duties at The Hague under peculiarly mournful circumstances. I well recollect calling upon him at his hotel one morning late in January 1889, a few days after his arrival, and learning from him the bare news which



had only just reached him of the death of the Crown Prince Rudolf. He was then still in ignorance of the particulars of the tragedy which had taken place at Mayerling. Six weeks after this terrible event came the almost sudden death of his own Secretary of Legation, Count Seilern, the husband of the beautiful Countess Mary Hohenwart, of whom we saw a great deal later on in her quiet home in the Heumarkt at Vienna. M. Okolicsányi, formerly the right-hand man of Count Andrassy at the Ballplatz, succeeded the friendly, hospitable Walterskirchens, who did not remain very long at The Hague. Of Okolicsányi, and his wife, Princess Olga Lobanow, I have already made mention in my Swedish reminiscences. An amiable couple, M. Louis Legrand and his wife, then represented the French Republic, and were deservedly popular with their colleagues and with Dutch society.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE HAGUE, 1888-1889—A VISIT TO HOMBURG

OUR first summer at The Hague has left me many pleasant recollections. Let alone the resources of the place itself, the de Brienens had so many friends in English society that after the London season there was generally a succession of visitors at Clingendaal for the races, or the cricket-matches, which latter the Brienens young ladies did a great deal to encourage; scratch teams of their English acquaintance coming over to play against some local eleven or other. The increasing interest which is now, by the way, shown in Holland in cricket, football and lawn-tennis, and latterly in golf, is the more remarkable that the Dutch were formerly little addicted to any form of athletics beyond their national pastime of skating. The Hague, too, is an admirable centre for excursions to many interesting places within easy reach of it by rail. Lord Bury and the Arnold Keppels<sup>1</sup> made a pilgrimage this summer to the ancient home in Gelderland whence their forebear had come in the days of Dutch William. Colonel and Lady Mabel Slaney and Lady Lascelles (now Lady Harewood) also made some stay at The Hague, and one day we took bonny, bright Lady Blanche Hozier, who was on a visit to the Brienens, to Haarlem with us, where at the Town Hall is to be seen the wonderful epitome

<sup>1</sup> The late and the present Earl of Albemarle.

of the life-work of joyous, rollicking Franz Hals ; the last pictures of the series pathetically revealing the gradually failing hand and waning powers of the man who went on painting till close upon his death at the age of eighty-six.

Meanwhile the same trouble that had taken me to Royat the year before induced me, at the end of August, to try the waters of Homburg. It was the height of the season, and the early morning crowd round the Elisabethbrunnen was more than usually brilliant and interesting. The Prince of Wales was on his annual visit ; a genial and much surrounded centre for the small world of his future subjects who flock hither at this time of year, mostly following the cure in very perfunctory fashion, and practically going through a supplementary London season. Of the immediate Royal *suite* and *entourage* I remember Colonel Teesdale, one of the gallant defenders of Kars ; also Christopher Sykes, and Mr. Reuben Sassoon. The Duke of Cambridge, with the late Colonel Greville in attendance, was here too as usual. Of the more distinguished English visitors I can recall sprightly Lady Dorothy Nevill, Lady Hayter, Lord Morris of the unctuous brogue that gave such zest to his capital stories, and Lord Bowen of the ready wit, whom no one ever met without wishing to meet him again. The Prince gave his customary pleasant little dinners on the terrace of the Kursaal, and at one of these I recollect sitting next to Lord Granville, who had taken in the beautiful Marchesa Montagliari, the daughter of my old friend Mrs. Fuller, *née* Bagge, and happened to be in the best form and spirits. In the course of dinner he told us a story which he had heard, he said, not long before from Lady \* \* \*. A very attractive and

fascinating woman of somewhat Bohemian antecedents and undetermined nationality was being laid siege to by an enterprising Frenchman, who was doing his best to find out something about her birthplace and former existence. The lady fenced very skilfully with him. She had evidently been everywhere, knew everybody, spoke every language, but carefully avoided committing herself to any country, while apparently at home in all. Her admirer was completely non-plussed, and at last said: "*Mais enfin, Madame quelle est votre véritable patrie?*" "*Ah! Monsieur!*" she replied, with a sigh and a languishing air, "*la seule véritable patrie est celle où l'on a aimé!*" "*Dans ce cas là, Madame,*" replied the Frenchman, "*votre patrie doit être la Macédoine!*" Lord Granville went on to say that he had retailed the story to a lady he had soon after sat next to at dinner, who was so delighted with it that she at once passed it on to her other neighbour. Lord Granville listened of course with some interest to her telling of it, and was quite pleased to find how correctly she repeated it, until she came to the Frenchman's brutal reply, which, to his great amusement, she gave as: "*Dans ce cas là, Madame, votre patrie doit être la mayonnaise!*" One dish, the poor lady probably thought, would do quite as well as another.

This was, I think, the last time I ever saw Lord Granville, for whose memory I have preserved a special regard. He had been the best and most considerate of chiefs to me, while, as to his social gifts, they were almost unrivalled amongst men of his generation. "He always seemed to feel," one who knew him well wrote of him, "or at least could show, a gracious interest in what interested his company, and possessed in supreme perfection the happy knack of putting those to whom he spoke in good

conceit with themselves." Unfailing was his personal kindness to us whenever we came to England, and very different were his ideas of hospitality from those of some of his successors at the Foreign Office who almost seem to ignore British Representatives at home on leave, whose often onerous task it is to keep up abroad the good name of England, not only officially but socially.

It is quite another figure, however, that stands out with special prominence in my memories of Homburg that season and during a stay I made there afterwards in September 1893. The Empress Frederick was residing at the curious old Schloss at Homburg, the abode of the former Landgraves, whose petty dominions were merged in Prussia in 1866, and which was for many years the dull home of our Princess Elizabeth, third daughter of George III. I well remember my old chief Sir Hamilton Seymour telling me of a surprise visit he had, with more zeal than discretion, thought it right to make there to the Princess, when he was left temporarily in charge of the Legation at Frankfort. After some difficulty in effecting an entrance, a servant in faded livery having at last let him in, he had been very graciously received, but the next day the Princess sent him a message begging that he would kindly give her notice when next he proposed coming to see her; the fact being, as he afterwards found out, that on such occasions gardeners, stable helpers, and other dependants were whipped up and put into spare livery coats and a semblance of Royal state thus improvised for the emergency.

By some unfortunate chance I had never seen the Empress until February of this year. In the autumn before—the year of her cruel bereavement—she had passed through Holland on her first visit to

the Queen, the Prince of Wales coming to fetch her at Flushing in the *Victoria and Albert*. Through an omission on the part of our worthy Vice-Consul de Bruyne—of all members of that service probably the one who has had most opportunities of shaking hands with our Royalties—I had not heard in time of these arrangements. To make this good I went to receive the Empress on her return from England and travelled with her as far as the junction at Rozendaal. I shall never forget the impression she made upon me during the long audience she granted me on board the Royal yacht. The sufferings she had passed through, the wrongs she had endured, were still so recent that she spoke of them with an exceeding bitterness, emphasising what she said with clenched hands, and betraying an emotion which speedily gained me, and more than explained the Queen's well-known reference to her as her "dear, persecuted daughter."<sup>1</sup> How severe had been the moral martyrdom she had undergone only those who knew the highly-gifted, impulsive Empress well can truly judge. With her generous hopes and ambitions, so cruelly foiled, the tragedy of her life seems to me one of the most complete of our times. I was soon asked to a small dinner at the Schloss, the only guests besides myself being Lady F. and her lovely daughter. A few years later the Empress showed herself the best of friends to me.

The Prince of Wales soon left Homburg on his return to England, and most of us, including Lord Granville, went to see him off at the station. There was the usual little *cercle* in the waiting-room; the Prince, when he said good-bye to me, charging me to give his best remembrances to the King of the Netherlands when next I saw his Majesty. I replied that I would of course not fail to acquit myself of H.R.H.'s

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Sidney Lee's "Queen Victoria, a Biography."

message, but it might be some time before I was able to do so, as I had not as yet had an audience of the King. "What? not seen the King yet?" exclaimed the Prince, and then, turning to Lord Granville, added, with a hearty laugh: "Do you think he is properly accredited?" and, with this pleasantry, left us and got into the train.

I was unfortunately so far from well at Homburg that I joined but little in the gaieties of the place, and was more than content in the society of my dear friend and relative Mrs. Wellesley, with whom and with Miss Ethel Cadogan I generally dined at quiet *restaurants* and went for long drives, going on one occasion to see the beautiful house which the Empress was having built at Kronberg. Before long my wife joined me from The Hague, and the waters having proved a complete failure, we went on a few days' visit to the Blumenthals at their *chalet* above Montreux—an enviable house in an ideal situation, looking down on the turquoise lake and facing the magnificent *Dent du Midi*. During our stay here two ladies came down one afternoon from the Hotel des Avants, above Glion, to do music with "Monsieur" and try over some of his songs. One of these was Mrs. Arkwright, an old and charming acquaintance of ours, the other, a Mrs. Armstrong, being quite unknown to us. Our host took them upstairs at once to his room, whence there presently proceeded the sounds of the loveliest voice I had, I think, ever heard, with a roundness and purity throughout its whole compass, and a perfection in the production of it that were absolutely unapproachable. The effect was entrancing, and it was a musical experience worth noting, for the voice was that of Madame Melba—whose name even we then hardly knew—and whom, without seeing her, we now heard for the first time.

Her voice was already then, what it has since remained, the most admirable vocal instrument it is possible to conceive. We were back at The Hague by the end of September, but went over to London for a few weeks, where, thanks to the able treatment of Dr. Harper of Hertford Street, I was in great measure relieved of the ailment I had suffered from for so long.

At the end of the year we were asked to a wedding in the Luynes family at Paris, the young head of which, Honoré, Duc de Luynes, was engaged to the only daughter of the Duchesse d'Uzès. The marriage was a great event in the monarchical set of French society, and all the relatives and connections of these two houses, which stand in the forefront of the old French *noblesse*, mustered in force for it. The young bridegroom was the representative of a very ancient family, closely bound up with the history of France, and specially noteworthy for the distinguished character of its heads for several generations, and the services they had rendered to the country, from the days of the great *connétable* of that name in the reign of Louis XIII. onwards.

The Luynes are one of the few territorial families who succeeded in preserving their estates during the stress of the great Revolution. It is a remarkable circumstance that, in the worst days of that hideous, sanguinary period, their splendid domain of Dampierre—with its *château*, built by Mansard, full of precious historical *souvenirs* of all kinds, and its magnificent park and gardens, laid out by Lenôtre—remained unscathed, the *citoyen* Luynes being left quite undisturbed, he being accounted a benefactor to the whole neighbourhood. Few, if any, are the great homes of pre-revolutionary France that passed in like manner through the fiery ordeal, and one cannot but ask oneself whether, if the majority of the landed aristocracy had manfully stuck to their acres, instead



of swelling the futile ranks of the emigration or of the *Armée de Condé*, the results might not have been very different for the country at large as well as for the fortunes of their own valuable class. The great-grandfather of Honoré de Luynes was a man of the highest culture, an eminent *savant* and archæologist, while his father, as I have said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> had gallantly met death on the battlefield in the Franco-German war.

We took with us to Paris for the occasion of this marriage my eldest son, Horace, who had now been appointed Honorary Attaché to the Legation, and put up at the Hotel Chatham in the Rue Neuve St. Augustin in very cold December weather. There was a great reception on the evening of the 9th at the d'Uzès' house in the Champs Elysées for the *signature du contrat* and the display of the presents which, I need hardly say, were if not so "numerous" certainly more "costly" than those often chronicled by our penny-aliners at a so-called fashionable London wedding. It was an exceedingly brilliant party, and to me doubly interesting by the number of people present whom I had known formerly or was connected with through the Polignacs. Much the prettiest person in the crowd was Lili de Luynes, then just nineteen, who, three years later, married the present Duc de Noailles, and is, I believe, the only French great lady who was personally asked to the late Coronation. The wedding itself took place on the 12th at the Church of St. Philippe du Roule, my wife being provokingly prevented by a sharp attack of influenza from going to it. The great feature of the function was the display of state carriages which the La Trémoilles, d'Harcourts, Noailles, La Rochefoucaulds, and other great Faubourg St. Germain people turned out for the occasion from the coach-houses where they had stood unused for years past. They made a brave show,

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. pp. 212-214.

which in fact had almost the character of a party manifestation, and I remember the Duc de Doudeauville—the grandfather of de Luynes and one of the heads of the French Royalists—who had brought out the gala coaches and liveries he had used when, as Duc de Bisaccia, he was ambassador in London, telling me with some glee, at the afternoon gathering at the d'Uzès after the wedding, that, amongst the crowd in the Champs Elysées attracted by this very un-Republican spectacle of ancient Court splendour, he had seen the President himself, M. Sadi Carnot. The hopes the ever faithful, ever sanguine party may have nourished in those days have since then been dashed time after time to the ground, but France remains as ever the country of the unexpected, and no one can tell what may yet be in store for her.

It was during this short stay at Paris that I saw my old colleague Lord Lytton for the last time. He and his wife, a perfect pattern of what an ambassador should be, had acquired as much popularity as any representatives of ours could hope for, at a period when a certain dislike and distrust of England still lingered among the higher circles of French society to a greater extent even than in its inferior strata. Our Government indeed, as the Queen herself had once, it is said, pointed out, amply showed their desire to do full honour to France by accrediting as successive ambassadors at Paris two ex-Viceroy of India, both highly gifted and essentially cosmopolitan in their tastes and habits, and certain, it might have been supposed, to acquire at once *tous les droits de bourgeoisie* with the refined and intellectual French people. It may be doubted, nevertheless, whether Lord Lytton, and Lord Dufferin after him, achieved in this respect the full measure of success to which they had every right to pretend, so strong remained

among cultivated Frenchmen, down even to much more recent days, the instinctive antipathy to England as the traditional adversary and rival. I say this advisedly, and as a slight tribute to the wise and skilful policy which has now brought about the *entente cordiale*—by far the greatest and most beneficent diplomatic achievement of our time.

That the feeling in certain Parisian circles in December 1889 was not altogether favourable to us, the following little anecdote may help not unamusingly to illustrate. I dined one evening with the Jaucourts, meeting there a few people, among whom were Colonel Talbot,<sup>1</sup> then Military Attaché at Paris, and his beautiful wife. Colonel Talbot had not been long at his post, and had just been elected to the French Jockey Club. In a small way this was quite an event, the "Jockey" being the most exclusive of Paris clubs, and many of its members belonging to a set reputed to be anything but cordially disposed towards the English. Talbot had in fact been warned that he ran considerable risk of being pilled, very few black balls sufficing to exclude an obnoxious candidate. After dinner he told me about his election. He had got in triumphantly, with only one black ball, and the first time he went to the Club had been careful to get presented, as is the custom in France, to most of the members. As he was going the round of the rooms, an old gentleman had come up to him, and, raising his hat with the greatest urbanity, had introduced himself as the Marquis de \* \* \*, and then said: "*Je tiens, Monsieur, à vous dire que c'est moi qui vous ai donné une boule noire, et que je l'ai fait parceque vous avez pour ancêtre le célèbre Talbot qui a fait brûler Jeanne d'Arc!*"

<sup>1</sup> Major-General the Honble. Sir Reginald Talbot, K.C.B., now Governor of Queensland.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HAGUE, 1889-1890—THE LAST DAYS OF KING WILLIAM

WELL might surprise be expressed that an Envoy who had been at his post for upwards of fifteen months should not yet have had an audience of the Sovereign to whom he was accredited. My position in this respect was indeed almost without precedent. On my arrival, in May 1888, I had called at once on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonkheer Hartsen, and when I requested him to take the King's orders as to the delivery of my credentials, he had told me that his Majesty much regretted being unable to receive me at the Castle of the Loo, where he was spending the summer, and therefore desired that I would hand my letters to his Minister for transmission to him. The same course was followed in the case of other foreign representatives who were accredited subsequently.

King William III., then in his seventy-second year, had been for some time past in an unsatisfactory state of health and unequal to the strain of any state functions. The chronic complaint with which he was afflicted before long assumed a more serious character. For many months, during which he was nursed day and night, with unflagging devotion, by Queen Emma, there were such frequent ups and downs in the King's condition, and so little transpired about it, that it was next to impossible, even

for the best informed, to arrive at an accurate opinion on the subject. A dark and impenetrable cloud seemed to hang over the remote country house where the last male representative of the illustrious line of Orange-Nassau lay lingering in the grasp of an incurable malady.

The position during this weary time was before long aggravated by complications that arose in the transaction of the public business, owing to the difficulty of obtaining the Royal signature, which, under the forms observed in Holland, is indispensable for even the simplest decrees or appointments. The Ministerial Departments were in fact constrained day by day to overstep their powers by taking upon themselves decisions which were practically illegal without the Royal sanction, and the entire administrative machinery was temporarily thrown out of gear.

At the beginning of March 1889 there were unmistakable signs that the King's normally vigorous intellect was partially obscured, and the necessity of providing before long for a due exercise of the regal functions had to be taken into immediate consideration. The establishment of a Regency was surrounded with difficulties. The articles of the Dutch Constitution dealing with this question are so framed as to bear the construction that the Sovereign, whose powers have to be delegated, is incapacitated from exercising them either by tender age or by mental decrepitude. The Constitution indeed appears only to contemplate the case of a Regency to be installed during the reign of a minor or of a lunatic, and in no way provides for such a contingency as the temporary illness of the Sovereign. The Ministers naturally, therefore, recoiled

from a decision which would have the effect of making public the painful fact that the last male Sovereign of the revered House of Orange was ending his days in a state of mental incapacity.

Meanwhile it became their first duty personally to assure themselves of the actual condition of the King, whom none of them had seen for some months past. Accordingly the Prime Minister, Baron Mackay,<sup>1</sup> together with his colleagues of the Foreign Office and of Justice, went down to the Loo on the 23rd of March, and acquired sufficient proof of the King being, for the time at least, incapacitated from exercising the Royal powers, to justify their making a formal announcement in this sense to the Legislature, and taking the initiatory steps necessary for the installation of a provisional Regency. Queen Emma herself was, on many and the best of grounds, very unwilling to assume functions which might interfere with what her Majesty considered her paramount duty of tending the Royal sufferer. Fortunately, the Constitution provided for such an emergency by giving powers to the Council of State to act for a period of thirty days pending the formal appointment of a Regent, and this expedient was accordingly resorted to.

Some particulars of the visit of the Ministers to the Loo, which afterwards became known, were of a very interesting character. They were unable, it seems, to see the King, who was in bed, but from the next room they recognised his well-known voice, and easily convinced themselves that his Majesty was wandering in his mind. Nor were they admitted to an audience by the Queen, who, as M.

<sup>1</sup> Baron Aeneas Mackay is a cousin of Lord Reay, and heir presumptive to the Reay peerage.

Hartsen put it to me, had, with characteristic tact, preferred, under the painful circumstances that had arisen, to keep as much as possible personally aloof from these delicate transactions. Her Majesty, however, had taken due care that the Ministers should be placed in possession of all the information they could possibly desire, and from the King's resident physician, as well as from the gentlemen in attendance upon him, they had received the most circumstantial details as to his Majesty's condition.

A pathetic little incident which occurred about this time was the King's reconciliation with one of the officers of his household, who had long been a great favourite with him, but had incurred the Royal displeasure by venturing to offer a respectful remonstrance on some decision taken by his Majesty. The officer in question, after a somewhat prolonged absence from Court, had just returned to the Loo for a month's duty. The King had got out of bed that morning at an unusually early hour—one of the strange features of his condition being that he no longer had any exact notion of time—and was dressing. He suddenly asked for his Aide-de-camp, and on recognising his familiar features, at once addressed him in jocular fashion, as in the days of his favour, as "*Seigneur Comte!*" forthwith adding: "*Passons une éponge sur toute cette histoire et donnez-moi la main!*" and then, quite unconscious of the hour—it was barely half-past six—directed his Aide-de-camp to have the carriage brought round. Count \* \* \* left the room, pretending to carry out the order, and, on his return, found that the King had put on several wraps, and over these his fur pelisse, and had then gone quietly to bed again, apparently satisfied that he was out for his morning drive.

M. Hartsen gave me another instance which well illustrated what he called the inherent nobility of King William's disposition. The King was known to be subject to almost ungovernable fits of temper, partly perhaps attributable to his maternal descent from the Russian Emperor Paul.<sup>1</sup> M. Hartsen, who always spoke of his Sovereign in terms of real affection, said he well remembered being once consulted by the King at Amsterdam on a point of business respecting which he had given an opinion that was distasteful to his Majesty, who had then dismissed him from the presence very roughly. The next day, at dinner at the Palace, the King had come up to him and said, "There were two of them quarrelling here yesterday, and you were not the one who was in the wrong." Together with his well-known foibles and defects King William unquestionably had redeeming qualities.

The King's first marriage with the singularly brilliant and accomplished, indeed erudite,<sup>2</sup> Princess Sophie of Wurtemberg turned out unhappily, the more so that their disagreements in some measure affected the prospects of the dynasty. There can be little doubt that the promising eldest son of that ill-starred union, the Prince of Orange—the universally popular "Prince Citron" whom I knew well in old days at Baden-Baden, in a set of which the Duke

<sup>1</sup> King William the Third's mother, Queen Anna Paulovna—a remarkable woman, very favourably mentioned in the recollections of Miss Disbrowe—was the daughter of the unfortunate and eccentric Emperor.

<sup>2</sup> The late M. de Gonzenbach (see "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. ii. pp. 193-5) told me how amazed he had been when, in referring in conversation with Queen Sophie to some question of dogma that had been discussed at one of the earliest and least known Councils of the Church, and being at a loss for its name, the Queen had at once supplied it. It was, I think, the Council of Utica.



of Hamilton<sup>1</sup> and Baron Vincent de Tuyll (the father of Madame de Brien) were prominent members—was more or less driven from his home, into the restless, erratic courses which hastened his untimely end, by the dissensions between his parents. Other circumstances, however, may have contributed to the Prince's self-imposed exile. Perhaps the only occasion on which the King and Queen Sophie were found to be in agreement was in preventing a marriage on which their eldest son had set his heart. The handsome and quite charming young lady for whom the Prince had conceived a very sincere affection belonged to one of the best and most highly connected families in the Kingdom. So bent was he on making her his wife, that the question whether the marriage of the heir to the throne with a lady who, however *bien née*, was not of royal rank, should, for State reasons, be allowed or not, was actually referred to the Council of State, and was decided in accordance with what was for once the joint will of both his parents. The Prince was then sent on a tour to the principal European Courts in the hope that he might find there some suitable consort. The attempt entirely failed, and he soon afterwards took to a wandering Bohemian life which ended sadly in Paris at an early age.

Travellers visiting The Hague are well acquainted with the House in the Wood where dwelt and died the gifted, but ill-mated Queen Sophie, full of ambitions that were never to be realised, and profoundly, indeed exceptionally, versed in the political transactions of her time in which fate denied her the part she was so well qualified to play. Her rooms are shown as they were lived in by her. Portraits of her children

<sup>1</sup> The father of the late Duke.

and of a few friends and intimates—the historian Motley's in a place of honour—hang on the walls; the furniture is symmetrically arranged in the stiff, formal lines dear to the fifties and sixties of last century, and all things have been left religiously undisturbed. In the room where ended her much-vexed, unsatisfactory life, there stands the simple bedstead draped with heavy hangings of dark-green silk—a dismal colour befitting a dreary chamber—and her big Bible still lies open on the table. But a careless glance at these rooms, and at one or two others chiefly decorated with exquisite Japanese needle-work and lacquer-ware—curiously reminding one of the days when the Dutch were the only people allowed any contact with the then stubbornly secluded race which is now amazing the world by its exploits—suffices for the tourist, who passes on to the great octagonal, painted saloon known as the *Oranjezaal*. It is here that his widow, Amalia von Solms, caused the deeds of Frederick Henry to be so oddly immortalised in the bewildering allegories, by Jordaens and others, in which nude goddesses and unclad captives of the hero's bow and spear so boldly obtrude themselves as to have made the room, one cannot help thinking, an incongruous meeting-place for sedate plenipotentiaries to the famous Conference that has become the new *titre à la gloire* of the deserted house in the beautiful shady wood. The latter, by the way, one is glad to note, has lately been preserved by a discerning Municipality from the eyesore of the "Palace of Peace" projected for its adornment by well-meant but somewhat self-advertising philanthropy.

Truly beautiful is this Hague wood—a genuine fragment of the primeval forest that formerly covered the country as far as Leyden, and is spoken of by St.

Evremond, in one of his letters, as "*le plus agréable que j'aie vu de ma vie.*" So dense is the shade of its hoary oaks and beeches that in the damp Dutch climate it chills one even on a warm summer day. Its glades and recesses are diversified by a graceful chain of lakes which in winter are much frequented by skaters. But the *Haagsche Bosch* is seen at its best on the occasion of some national holiday, such as the birthday of the Queen or the Queen Regent, when the trees along the main roads are all hung with Chinese lanterns, the margins of the great ponds are outlined with festoons of coloured lights, while big illuminated barges with bands of music move slowly upon the water. Nowhere have I seen more effective illuminations.

Our first experience of one of these typical Dutch high-days was the memorable celebration, on the 12th May 1889, of the fortieth anniversary of the King's accession to the throne which, for weeks past, it had been feared would never be held. What might almost be called the King's miraculous resurrection had been accompanied by incidents of a well-nigh dramatic character. On the fourth day after the transfer of the Royal powers to the Council of State the King had suddenly quite recovered his normal consciousness. On waking in the morning he had at once asked what was the date and the day of the week—he had before lost all count of time—and his brain thereupon clearing completely, he without hesitation approved all the steps that had been rendered necessary by his mental breakdown, and himself expressed his desire that the Queen should be invested with the Regency. He then sent for his resident physician, Dr. Vlaanderen, and with his own hand bestowed on him the order of the Golden Lion of Nassau. As a result

of this astounding change, the States-General which had been called together in plenary session on the 2nd of May to pass the Regency Bill, were in lieu thereof officially informed that the Sovereign had recovered sufficiently to resume the reins of Government.

Under such circumstances as these, the Jubilee was celebrated with truly striking demonstrations of loyalty on the part of the population. It was clear that, with all their Republican traditions and their largely democratic sentiments, the feeling of devotion to the House of Orange had not in the least lost its hold on the Dutch people. The whole town was spontaneously illuminated *a giorno*, and the old traditional Kermesse spirit being roused in the Dutch lieges, the rejoicings took a decidedly noisy, convivial turn. Bands of revelers of both sexes, linked arm in arm—*hossapartijen* as they are called—swept the narrower streets from side to side with uproarious cries and songs; soldiers in uniform—alas! for the enforcement of discipline in the Dutch army—here and there forming part of them. A staid, orderly lot the Dutch lower orders as a rule, but, on these occasions, prone to indulge in the roughest of horse-play. Even in our remoter corner of the town the shouts of “Oranje bove!” and snatches from the grand old chaunt of “*Wilelmus van Nassouwen*” kept one awake half through the night.

Though, when once we had settled down in the Hooge Westeinde, we fairly did our duty by colleagues and Dutch society, in the shape of dinners and small dances—for the latter of which the young people we had at home and the excellence of the parquet floor in our ball-room offered a ready excuse—the quiet, even tenour of our lives has left me, I fear, but little

of real interest to chronicle. In one respect, however, the closeness of The Hague to bigger centres afforded us, with our musical proclivities, many opportunities of hearing and doing music in the pleasantest way. Poor Arthur Goring Thomas stayed with us for ten days one spring—the last time, if I remember right, that we saw much of this most graceful of English composers of his day. We went through the scores of his “Esmeralda” and “Nadejda” with him, not to speak of his many charming songs, some of which had been written expressly for my wife. We had besides almost yearly glimpses of two distinguished artists—both Dutchmen by birth—who have made London their musical centre and enjoy there the greatest popularity: MM. Hollmann and Wolff. Hollmann, when on his way to his native home near Maastricht, never failed to put in an appearance at the Legation, and, after dining with us, would casually say: “*J’ai laissé Madame Hollmann* (his ‘cello) *à l’antichambre,*” and then would play for us most good-naturedly all through the evening as he only can do. I cannot say that there was much music in society at The Hague, but there were a few really good musicians among our friends and colleagues, and these we gathered together at our little musical parties. Monsignor Rinaldini—the Papal Internuncio—an amiable specimen of the mundane prelate, who was frankly *fanatico per la musica*, was a constant visitor on these occasions, but was before long succeeded by Monsignor Lorenzelli, a learned ecclesiastic of a very different type, whose name bids fair to go down to posterity in connection with the great conflict now being waged between Church and State in France, where he was, up till the other day, the representative—possibly the last in that country—of the Holy

See. To go back to music, the admirable Lamoureux orchestra, which has since lost its great conductor, gave a series of splendid performances in the hall of the *Gebouw voor Kunst en Wetenschappen*—a concert-room such as London cannot boast of. The fine Philharmonic band of Kass from Amsterdam, too, came over occasionally to play at the *Diligentia* rooms; a feature of these concerts being the rapt attention of audiences mostly taken from the higher middle class where serious music is sedulously cultivated.

The theatre, on the other hand, was sadly neglected at The Hague, and offered no real resource. In the earlier years of the reign of King William III. some interest had been taken by the Court in the Italian or French opera companies which came for the winter season to the small, but fairly attractive, theatre in the *Korte Voorhout*. At the time of our stay, the cessation of the Royal subvention, added to the niggardly spirit of the Municipality—where a narrow-minded Calvinistic clique, who objected to the stage on principle, then ruled the roast—reduced successive *impresarios* to such straits that they had to recruit their leading singers from second-rate French or Belgian theatres, while the *mise en scène* was wretched, and the chorus and ballet-corps were absolutely grotesque both in their performances and appearance. A set of us, both Dutch and diplomats, did our best to help the struggling undertaking by subscribing to a large omnibus box, one of the members being a worthy colleague of mine who was the cheeriest of men and had a keen sense of humour which, when tickled, was apt to find vent in formidable peals of laughter. There were, among the so-called ballet-girls, a few matronly frumps whose looks and dancing-

attire defy description. My genial colleague's hearty guffaws at sight of these poor creatures enlivened many a dreary performance, though they not a little startled sedate Hague audiences. I am afraid there is no denying that the behaviour of our omnibus box was not at all times strictly decorous.

It is only fair to add that the quality of the opera troupes improved later on. We had through two or three seasons a good tenor who, as Don José in "Carmen," for instance, both acted and sang extremely well, while the French *mezzo-soprano* who took the part of the Philistine enchantress in "Samson et Dalila"—that masterpiece of Saint Saëns, the production of which in England has been prevented by, to my mind, a most absurd prejudice—had made a very clever and brilliant study of it which would have brought her success anywhere. She had all the makings of a great artist, but died quite young, and almost unknown except to the audiences of a few provincial theatres. Even the name of the poor thing has escaped a memory which I too often find oblivious of important matters and idly tenacious of trifles.

If music did not stand on a pinnacle in Holland in my time, the same could not be said of the great sister-art of painting, in which Josef Israels, the Marises, Mesdag, of the living, with Mauve and Bosboom among the lately departed, had done or were doing more than honour to the splendid traditions of the Dutch school. The almost unbroken line carried down from the giants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the foremost painters of our day is in every way remarkable. Pictorial art has taken such deep root in Dutch soil that the men of the present time may fairly claim to be the

direct continuators, both in landscape and in *genre*, of their great forefathers, whose footsteps they certainly follow in their earnest search after truth and honesty of design. With all due diffidence I venture to hold that among modern schools of painting the Dutch stands on a very high plane. We paid several pleasant visits to the studio of Josef Israels, then already turned seventy, but still brimful of life in that tiny frame of his—for, like his celebrated contemporary “*die kleine Excellenz*,” Menzel, of Berlin, he is one of the most diminutive of mortals. Sadly sombre though may be his conception of the poor and desolate, as expressed in the almost painful pathos of his presentments of hard, narrow or broken lives, the shrewd countenance of the great painter nevertheless has a bright, kindly look. Very interesting are the appliances he resorts to for the exact rendering of some of his favourite scenes; part of his big studio being turned into a fac-simile of a room in one of the poor cottages he mostly chooses for the setting of his pictures, with its scanty furniture, and homely implements and utensils. Very different in appearance is his fellow-townsmen of Groningen, Hendrik Mesdag, the celebrated marine painter. With his strong, burly build he looks made to stand on occasion the buffetings of the rough element he depicts so admirably. Half his day is spent on the sands at Scheveningen, watching the changing moods of the grey North Sea and the quaint ways of the fisher-folk, and the rest of it in his luxurious home in the Zeestraat where, with his artist wife, he has gathered together a splendid collection of French pictures of the Barbizon and other schools. M. Mesdag is or was President of the Pulchri Studio Society, the annual exhibitions of which are among the most



interesting to be seen abroad, and take a very creditable place even in the capital which contains the Mauritshuis, to my mind perhaps the most perfect picture gallery I know. But I must check myself lest these recollections should turn into an inferior Baedeker or Murray.

Having, however, mentioned the Mauritshuis, I may go on to say that the building has, for an Englishman, a special interest besides its gruesomely splendid "School of Anatomy," its lovely *Vermeer of Delft*, the mighty bull of Paul Potter, and—at right angles with what I permit myself to think that rather overrated picture—the saddening presentment, by Van der Helst, of its great painter already visibly a dying man. At the Mauritshuis it was that Charles II. was lodged, and most sumptuously entertained by the States-General during the few days he passed at The Hague, when on his way to England in May 1660. A banquet given to him there was commemorated, together with other incidents of his sojourn, by the contemporary Dutch artist F. T. Vliet.<sup>1</sup> At an auction at The Hague I secured the original drawing for this banquet scene, in which the Royal group, seated above the salt, is historically of great interest. The restored monarch is at the head of the table, between his aunt, Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia, and his sister, the widowed Princess of Orange. To the King's left are his brothers of York and Gloucester, and to his right is a boy of ten, looking over his shoulder, who is no other than William Prince of Orange, and who immediately faces the uncle whose daughter he was to marry and whose throne he was to usurp. The

<sup>1</sup> There is a set of six or eight engravings, known to collectors, which depict the principal incidents of the King's stay in Holland.

departure of the Merry Monarch for the Kingdom to which he was recalled became a favourite theme for the painters of the day. The Dutch museums contain various pictures of more or less merit, depicting his embarkation at Scheveningen, with a grand display of troops on the sands, the lumbering state coaches that brought him and his suite from the town, and, in the offing, the tall masts of Montagu's fleet. Changed though be the place since those days, there is not much difficulty in reconstructing the whole memorable scene.

But in a space of at most a few acres there are at The Hague half-a-dozen spots, but little altered, that have witnessed remarkable, and in some instances terrible events. Leaving the Mauritshuis, and crossing the inner square of the Binnenhof, one passes the steps leading up to the old Hall of the Knights on which was erected the scaffold of the venerable Olden Barneveld, judicially murdered by Maurice of Orange. In the ancient chapel of the Counts of Holland hard by, the headless corpse of the Grand Pensionary was temporarily deposited, and here, too, were found at the close of the eighteenth century, the embalmed remains of a daughter of the Lamoral Egmont equally murdered judicially by Alva at Brussels. Not five hundred yards further, at the angle of the Kneuterdyck, stood the Wassenaer house—now turned into the Ministry of Finance—where their High Mightinesses,<sup>1</sup> with characteristic munificence, during forty years, lodged and provided for all the, by no means modest, wants of the Queen of Hearts, after she had been driven from her one year's kingdom at Prague to seek an asylum in Holland. In this house were celebrated the nuptials of the valiant Frederick Henry

<sup>1</sup> The official style given to the Dutch States-General.

and his Amalia von Solms, then attached to the Court of the refugee Queen. Here, too, bold Rupert of the Rhine used to stay when on his holidays from the University of Leyden, and within those walls may have been hatched the daring plot for the assassination of Cromwell's Envoy, Dorislaus, with which the younger, wild, dissolute sons of poor Elizabeth were credited. On the Plaats, close by, on the site of Van der Pyl's much-frequented fashionable *restaurant*, there had stood the ancient hostelry of the *Witte Zwaan*, where, not six months after the execution of King Charles, in whose trial he had been deeply implicated, the Republican Envoy, when at supper with the other inmates of the inn, was surprised by a band of masked men, who, extinguishing the lights, fell upon him and cut him to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am tempted to subjoin an extract from a curious letter in The Hague Archives, written by a Royalist, signing himself G. Lane, and addressed to his namesake "at H.M. Court the King of Brightaigne at Brugge," and dated Hage the 9th of April 1658:

"Both the Dukes" [York and Gloucester] "are heere, they came on Tuesday night late, with the Earle of Norwich, Mr. Jernyne and Mr. —; they were yesterday with there sister over all the faire and in the dancing of the Ropes, and to-day they are at Ryswyk at dinner, entertained by La — and some other of our Dutch gentry, but Downing hath complained already of there being heere, he is a fearfull gentleman, and the next day after the Princess came to toone from Breda, he set two of his footmen to stand sentry the whole day: one on the top of the stairs before the doore, and the other below at the corner of the house at the end of the little streete over against prince Maurits his house, to watch the Bar<sup>d</sup> gate in that lane, but since that day (nor before) I never saw any, hee is now removed to a house that hee hath hired (or Mr. Harvy for him) at the end of the Caesemart [Cheese market] for 700 gs. [guilders] ye yeare, but hee would faine have put it of againe if hee could: and have taken a house in the forehoulth [Voorhout], but I hope his next (with all the rest of his comrades) remove will be to the gallowes, where they may have that they soe justly feare and their due rewards," &c. &c.

The "fearfull gentleman" trimmed his sails so well that at the Restoration he was confirmed in his appointment, and created a Baronet by Charles II. Downing Street, built on land purchased by the successful diplomatic trimmer, will carry his name down to the remotest generations.

In the same Kneuterdijk, barely a stone's throw away, stand, divided by the narrow lane called Hartogstraatje, two old houses, of which one became in later days the abode of my first chief in diplomacy, Sir Ralph Abercromby, while in the other we were present at the wedding of the beautiful Mademoiselle Corry Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, daughter of one of the Queen's *Dames du Palais*—an important social event in The Hague world of our time. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century these two houses were respectively lived in by the Grand Pensionary John de Witt and his brother-in-law van Zwyndrecht. To the last-mentioned of the two houses was addressed on the morning of the 20th August 1672, a message to de Witt from his brother, Cornelius, who some time before had been arrested, and was confined in the prison of the Gevangenpoort close by, on a trumped-up accusation of complicity in a conspiracy to murder the young Stadtholder William III. Cornelius had been barbarously tortured in prison, but in vain, and finding they could extort nothing from him, his judges had sentenced him, on a charge they were unable to substantiate, to banishment for life from his native province of Holland. The innocent man wished, before submitting to an iniquitous sentence and going into exile, to have speech with his brother, and therefore sent him word to come to him.<sup>1</sup> De Witt happened to have gone over to his relative Zwyndrecht in the opposite house across the lane, and there the fatal message, which had been entrusted to a maid-servant of the gaoler of the Gevangenpoort, Van Bossi, was delivered to

<sup>1</sup> The generally received version of the incident is that the message was a trap devised to get hold of the Grand Pensionary. This, however, M. Lefèvre Pontalis entirely disproves in his very fine work entitled *Jean de Witt*.

him. In the dead wall of the lane can still be seen the garden door through which the statesman unconsciously went to his doom. A few hours later both brothers were dragged out of the prison by a raging Orangist mob, and massacred, with every possible indignity, in the public square, in full view of the house where their aged father was then residing. By a curious chance one of these two houses—Zwyndrecht's I think—became the appropriate abode of John Lothrop Motley when he was American Minister at The Hague, and here, on the very spot that had witnessed some of the most dramatic occurrences of Dutch history, he wrote the greater part of his admirable account of the rise and growth of the Netherlands.

But I must go back from this historical digression to my somewhat disjointed narrative. In some rough notes I have by me, I find that the opening of 1890 was marked at The Hague by one of the most severe visitations of the fiend influenza that I can remember. The Government departments were thrown entirely out of gear by it, and at the Legation not only were most of our servants laid up, but the only two members of the Chancery, Mr. Fenton, the First Secretary, and Mr. Conyngham Greene,<sup>1</sup> were both confined to their houses for several weeks. I had just lost the services as Honorary Attaché of my eldest son, who, having obtained a nomination for the forthcoming competitive diplomatic examination, had gone to England to prepare for it, so that I was actually reduced to asking my wife to copy my despatches for me. Conyngham Greene served with me for nearly

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Conyngham Greene, K.C.B., is now H.M. Envoy at Berne.

two years, and acquired a knowledge of the Dutch and their language that was to be very useful to him later on. More than a passing mention is due to him, as well as to his wife, Lady Lily, full of bright Irish humour, and happily blest with a fund of spirits which must have been a godsend to her and her husband during the trying period preceding the outbreak of the South African war, when, as our Agent at Pretoria, he well earned the K.C.B. afterwards conferred upon him.

The Slave Trade Conference then sitting at Brussels gave us an unusual amount of work throughout this year at The Hague; thanks to the determined opposition made by the Dutch Government to the proposal, accepted by the other Powers, that the newly created Independent Congo State should be authorised to levy certain import duties for fiscal purposes. This tiresome business took me twice to Brussels, where I stayed at the Legation with Creppy Vivian,<sup>1</sup> an old Foreign Office friend of mine, and made the acquaintance of Baron de Lambermont, *Secrétaire-Général* at the Belgian Foreign Office, who was presiding over the Conference with great skill and tact. I had several important interviews with him which impressed me with a sense of his exceptional abilities. During one of these flying visits to Brussels, I renewed acquaintance with the Dowager Princesse de Ligne, *née* Princesse Lubomirska, whom I had known in my youth in France—a delightful old lady whose *salon* at the Hôtel de Ligne in the Rue Royale was open to her friends every evening, and who up till the last preserved the peculiar charm and seductive manner that so distinguish Polish women of

<sup>1</sup> The 3rd Lord Vivian, afterwards Ambassador at Rome, where he died a very few years afterwards.

her class, and have not a little contributed to keep alive the interest felt in the wrongs and misfortunes of Poland. The Princesse de Ligne came to The Hague a year or two afterwards and dined with us, I remember. She was then well on her way to eighty, but still the prettiest of old ladies, and almost a Ninon de Lenclos in her quick intelligence and active ways.

Meanwhile a great surprise was in store for the heads of Missions accredited to the Court of the Netherlands, in the quite unexpected invitation to a State Banquet at the Castle of the Loo, for the 19th February, on the occasion of the King's seventy-third birthday. From time to time one had heard of the improvement which had taken place in the Royal invalid's condition since his wonderful recovery nearly a twelvemonth before. The Royal invitation none the less came as a surprise. The only drawback to it was the railway journey of two hours and a half in full uniform, to Apeldoorn, which is fifty-five miles from The Hague. A special train, however, took us there, together with the Cabinet Ministers, the *Dames du Palais* and other Court dignitaries, Royal carriages meeting us at the station. We had been given to understand that it was uncertain whether the King would be able to go through the fatigue of seeing any of us. We were, therefore, scarcely prepared to hear, on our arrival, that it was H.M.'s intention to receive the Belgian Minister, Baron d'Anethan, as *Doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps, and then those Ministers who, like myself, had been prevented by the King's prolonged illness from delivering their credentials to him in person.

On entering the audience chamber, I found the

King seated in a big arm-chair, and wearing the undress uniform of an Admiral. I was familiar with his features from the portraits I had seen of him, and found him looking far better than I expected, though somewhat pale and worn, while the exceptionally strong voice for which, like the first Duke of Cambridge, he was well known, remained quite unimpaired. I have kept a vivid recollection of this audience. Nothing could be more gracious than the King's reception of me. He spoke in excellent English of the Queen, for whom he professed the greatest regard, and referred to his constant friendship for England and the many "members of our aristocracy" whom he had known and liked, inquiring after several of them by name. He dwelt, too, on the ties "that bound together the two greatest seafaring nations of the earth," and, during the ten minutes' interview he granted me, clearly laid himself out to show me special kindness and cordiality. After dismissing me he received the Austro-Hungarian and United States Ministers, and one or two *Chargés d'Affaires*.

Queen Emma in the meantime had been holding a *cercle*, in a long gallery adjoining, with Princess Wilhelmina, then a little girl not ten years old, in a short frock with her hair down her back. I joined the *cercle* after my audience of the King, and, as I stood waiting there for the Queen to address me in my turn, could distinctly hear the King speaking in loud tones to my colleagues or his own Ministers. The sounds, however, soon came to an end, and almost immediately a gentleman of the Royal household approached the Queen with a message; the little Princess thereupon leaving her mother and going to the upper end of the gallery where two doors, one of



which led into the presence chamber, faced each other. In a minute or two she reappeared walking hand-in-hand with the King, who passed straight across the gallery into his private apartments beyond. It was an interesting and memorable sight, and there was a touching contrast between the slender figure of the child-princess, and the tall, big frame of her father, side by side with, and towering over, her. The King walked quite briskly, but with a slight halt in his gait, and held himself singularly erect, though, in doing so, it was evident that he was pulling himself together. His exit was wonderfully dignified, and proved to be final, for having once passed the door, he was never beheld again by any of those who watched the scene, except by a few of his more immediate attendants. Altogether, he went through the ordeal, which he confessed to one of his intimates had been most trying to him, with extraordinary pluck. He had not put on a uniform, nor seen any one beyond the persons of his household, for upwards of eighteen months. A curious circumstance of this his last birthday was that, among its honours (to which he always personally attached much importance), he conferred the Grand Cross of the Lion of the Netherlands on Prince Henry of Prussia and on President Krüger.

After this supreme effort, there were constant alternations in the Sovereign's condition, though, in August, he was sufficiently well to see his brother-in-law, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who, with his daughter the Duchess John Albert of Mecklenburg, paid a visit to the Loo after the Scheveningen bathing season. At last, early in October, there came a sudden change for the worse, and the States-General had to be called together again in plenary session to provide for the due exercise of the Royal powers.

Affairs in fact took exactly the same course they had followed a twelvemonth before, with this difference, that Queen Emma, knowing the King's wishes, now consented to assume the Regency, and accordingly, on the 20th November, took the oaths before both Houses of the States-General assembled in joint session. The Queen proceeded to the Binnenhof in semi-state, and throughout the solemn, and to her necessarily painful, function, bore herself with admirable composure and dignity. Three days later the King passed quietly away, having been quite unconscious for some time before.

The Royal obsequies were celebrated with great solemnity, the ceremonies in connection with them being of a very impressive character. On Monday, the 1st of December, the King's remains were conveyed to The Hague from the Loo in a train that passed through Amersfoort, Utrecht, and Gouda. At all the stations, and along the whole line, great crowds were assembled to watch for its passage, and at the principal towns, where the train drew up and was received with full honours by the civil and military authorities, the entire population was afoot. Thus, steaming slowly through a short December day, along the flat Dutch country, to the tolling of bells from village churches half shrouded by the winter mists, past ancient cities whose records are wrapped up with those of the dynasty, the Royal funeral train finally reached the capital late in the afternoon.

The procession which was formed from the Railway Station to the Palace was wonderfully striking. I saw it from the windows of the German Legation on the Vijverberg. It took fully an hour to reach the Palace in the Noordeinde, so that by the time

it came along the line of the Vijverberg, facing the splendid old Binnenhof across the water, with its picturesque buildings and countless historical associations, the winter light was fast fading away, and the passage of the great Royal hearse, surrounded by all the high officers of State, took place by torchlight, leaving an impression not readily to be forgotten. The last direct male representative of William the Silent could not have been brought back in more solemn and fitting guise from the secluded seat in Gelderland where he breathed his last.

Then came the lying-in-state in a large room on the ground floor of the Palace; the throngs of people of every class, all in deep mourning, that filed past the catafalque surrounded by the King's aides-de-camp and the grenadiers of the guard, being such as had never before collected in the quiet Dutch capital. The King was buried at Delft in the Royal vault—in the so-called New Church built at the end of the fourteenth century—close by the fine monument to the Silent One who was murdered in the Prinsenhof a few hundred yards away. From the house of the *antiquaire* Teunissen in the Noordeinde, we saw the great funeral procession leave the Palace. It was of imposing proportions; and its extreme length, with the narrow streets and roads along which it had to pass, unfortunately so impeded its progress that it took upwards of four hours to reach its destination, barely six miles distant. One of the Court carriages, with the foreign princes attending the funeral, contained the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, the Comte de Flandre and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar—the latter representing our Queen—who were all unusually tall, big

men, and to them the drive may well have appeared endless. After the procession had started, my coachman drove me round by devious ways, with Conyngnam Greene and George Jolliffe,<sup>1</sup> to the Delft road, thus easily outstripping the sombre *cortège*. In true Dutch fashion, the avenue to Delft hugs a canal the whole way, and the banks of this were lined by dense masses of people, who occupied every point of vantage, from the bridges to the barges on the canal and the platforms half way up the quaint, giant windmills. The scene in the great, bare, whitewashed church, where we waited some three hours in the cold, was unquestionably striking, but to me the very short ceremony seemed bald and unsatisfactory, no religious character attending it beyond a sort of funeral oration by the Court chaplain. Not a single prayer was said, and not even a blessing pronounced over the coffin. The whole function unmistakably bore the stamp of the sternest Calvinism. Its only emotional feature was the ancient melody of "*Willemus van Nassouwen*," which was finely played on the organ with minor chords as the coffin was lowered into the vault. This beautiful archaic tune dates from William the Silent, and is said to have put heart into the hard-pressed citizens of some besieged town during the great struggle against Spain when the strains of it reached them from the vessels that were bringing them succour. I was reminded of Radetzky's funeral at Vienna,<sup>2</sup> when the splendid bands, as they filed past, played the dare-devil Radetzky march in the same way as a dirge in a minor key.

In accordance with a custom which is traditional

<sup>1</sup> Now the 3rd Lord Hylton, who left The Hague all too soon, and, a few years later, retired from the Diplomatic Service.

<sup>2</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. pp. 262-64.

at the Dutch Court, the ceremonies concluded with a great banquet, given the same evening in honour of the numerous Foreign Princes and the other Foreign Representatives who had attended the funeral; the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, the late King's sister, presiding at it on behalf of the Queen Regent.

The death of King William made a profound impression all over the Kingdom, although he had during the space of more than two years been withdrawn by ill-health from the public gaze. The attitude of the Dutch people had throughout been exemplary. Devoted to the House of Orange, they had sadly watched the decay of its last King, condoning, as it were, his foibles—those of Henri IV., of Charles II., and other popular monarchs—in their recollection of his sturdy patriotism, of his love for the country and of his conscientious discharge of his kingly duties. It now became the earnest prayer of all but a small fraction of ultra Democrats and Socialists, that the youthful Queen might be preserved to her people, and attain marriageable age, the tender years and grace of the new Sovereign appealing with irresistible force to the loyalty and to the best instincts of the nation.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE HAGUE, 1890-92—THE COURT OF LUXEMBURG.

By the death of King William III. the personal union under one Sovereign between the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and the Kingdom of the Netherlands had come to an end; the Duke of Nassau, as head of the senior, or Walram, line of that illustrious House, succeeding to the throne of Luxemburg in virtue of an old compact between the two branches of the family.

When dispossessed of his old hereditary dominions by the events of 1866 the Duke had retired to Vienna, which he had made his chief home, and where he built, in what is known as the Ambassadors' quarter, a fine house which was afterwards purchased by the Russian Government for the use of their Embassy. At his advanced age—he was then in his seventy-fourth year—it seemed almost hard upon the Duke to have to leave Austria—where he was held in the highest esteem by the Emperor and was universally popular—in order to make a fresh departure in the government of what was practically to him a strange country. The exercise of power and authority has undeniable attractions, but in the case of the Grand Duke Adolf it was principally a high sense of duty towards his new subjects that influenced a decision which neither he nor they have since had any cause to regret. No European ruler is more respected and beloved than is their venerable Grand Duke by the inhabitants of the smiling, rose-growing land of Luxemburg.

It was my good fortune to be specially accredited

to this kindly Sovereign when the political severance between the Kingdom and the Grand Duchy took place, having before been Envoy to the late King William in his capacity as Grand Duke. In June 1891 I went to Luxemburg to present my letters. The traveller who enters the country for the first time as I did from Belgium—that being the nearest approach to it from The Hague—might easily imagine that he is crossing the German frontier, the Customs line being that of the German Zollverein, and the Luxemburg railroads forming part of the German Railway system. None the less, though to outward appearance folded in the German embrace, the small country is very tenacious of its idiosyncrasy among autonomous States. There are a few German and French sympathisers in the Grand Duchy, but the Luxemburgers rightly prize their neutrality, as guaranteed to them by the Treaty of London of 1867, and still more the accompanying advantages it brings to them of exemption from all military burdens. They had indeed already enjoyed full administrative freedom under their Dutch ruler;—the Netherlands Government scrupulously avoiding even the appearance of any interference in the internal concerns of the Grand Duchy—but they were now for the first time in their history invested with complete national independence under a Prince of their own, and were thoroughly resolved not to sacrifice their privileged position to any neighbour, however powerful.

These were indeed halcyon days for the peaceful little city, which, not a quarter of a century before, had still been the most formidable of fortresses—a sort of inland Gibraltar—and, as such, gave rise to a grave European crisis which well-nigh antedated by three years the great Franco-German conflict. Even

in unfavourable June weather the small town—raised on its rocky platform, and surrounded by deep precipitous ravines, with only just a few remaining fragments of the fortifications, such as part of the picturesque old Spanish towers, left to adorn it and recall its martial history—had an engaging well-to-do aspect. I was fetched for my audience with the Grand Duke from the then somewhat mean and primitive (since greatly improved) Hotel Brasseur by an extremely well-turned-out Royal carriage, and in the evening was asked to dinner at the Château de Walferdange, which is about half-an-hour from the town, and was the Grand Ducal residence for the time being. The Royal household was admirably organised in all respects, as indeed it had been in the old days at Wiesbaden, where I could remember going over from Frankfort to the prettiest of balls with my chief Sir Alexander Malet. Towards the end of a very *soigné* dinner, the Grand Duke's own particular *Steinberg Cabinet* was handed round, and, turning to me, H.R.H. pledged me in it in the kindest of terms as the representative of "*la puissance la plus amie*," adding in a sort of aside: "*Ce vin est tout ce qu'on m'a laissé!*"

I went to Luxemburg again six weeks later for the celebration of the Grand Duke's birthday on the 24th of July. My wife was with me this time, and several of our Hague colleagues who, like myself, were accredited to the Grand Ducal Court. The Walterskirchens, the Spinolas, the Nuncio, Mgr. Rinaldini, and the Spanish Minister, Villa Urrutia, all travelled with us, and the journey became a diplomatic outing which was repeated nearly each year during our stay at The Hague, and was one of the most enjoyable interludes of the summer season. There were great festivities on this occasion in honour of the accession,



and the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, together with the Hereditary Grand Duke and his sister the charming Hereditary Grand Duchess Hilda of Baden, made a State entry into the Luxemburg capital. This *joyeuse entrée*, as it was called, was an extremely pretty sight. One of its most pleasing features was a guard of honour composed of young landowners, uncommonly well mounted, and wearing a neat hunting dress in the Anhalt colours, out of compliment to the Grand Duchess—a Princess of that House who still preserved great traces of beauty. These gentlemen escorted the Royal carriages, which were admirably appointed in every respect; the general effect of the small *cortège* as it passed through the gaily decorated town being remarkably smart. In lieu of troops, the streets were lined by some two hundred associations from all parts of the country, composed of firemen, workmen's unions, gymnastic, choral and other societies, who all marched past the Palace by torchlight in the evening.

There was a *Te Deum* in the old Gothic Cathedral of Notre Dame, where, almost hidden away in a dark corner, is the quite plain tomb of the blind King John of Bohemia—of the House of Luxemburg—killed when charging at Crécy. His remains, however, no longer lie beneath it, having long since been removed elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The strangest vicissitudes attended the remains of the grand old fighter whose crest and motto are borne by our Princes of Wales. He was first buried in the Abbey of Valloire, but was afterwards moved no less than five times—the coffin being twice saved from the flames which at two different periods destroyed the Abbey of Münster. At the French Revolution, when the Luxemburg Franciscan Monks—in whose custody it then was—were expelled, a baker of the town rescued and preserved the coffin, and it came later into the possession of a rich manufacturer, who placed it in his collection of curios. Here it was seen and purchased in 1838 by Frederick William IV. of Prussia, and was finally interred by him at Castell on the Saar under a monument—the fourth erected to this heroic son of the Emperor Henry VII., and father of the Emperor Charles IV.

After this function came an official luncheon given to the Diplomatic Corps and the principal authorities by the *Ministre d'Etat*, M. Eyschen, an able administrator well fitted to play a leading part in a much more important country than that to which he devotes his services. The only drawback to this entertainment was its lasting so long that one barely had time after it to get ready for the Grand Ducal State banquet at Walferdange.

In the course of our yearly visits we came to know the Luxemburg Royalties and their suite so well—the charming wife of the heir to the throne, a Princess of Braganza, and sister of the Archduchess, Marie Thérèse of Austria, being soon added to the Royal circle—that the birthday celebration which took us to the Grand Duchy became a date we looked forward to with no little pleasure. No Court of its size is on a better footing or more perfectly organised than this, the ample private income of the Grand Duke enabling him to live *en très grand seigneur*. He is a thorough sportsman, a capital shot, and an experienced whip. His stables are full of first-class horses, and his teams of thoroughbred Hungarian *juckers* do great credit to his master of the horse, Count Wolff-Metternich, who is the best type of an Austrian cavalry officer. After dinner, in the summer evenings at Walferdange, the Grand Duke himself would take us for a drive in a light break, tooling his team over the hilly roads with much skill and judgment notwithstanding his somewhat failing sight. Varied by excursions to Diekirch and the splendid ruins of the castle of Vianden, or across the border to Trier or Liège, these summer diplomatic holidays were among the most pleasant I can look back to, and in writing of them here I rejoice to think that the

*doyen* by age of European sovereigns, the Grand Duke who showed us so much kindness, and from whom I took my final leave in 1896, is still in the enjoyment of excellent health, and more firmly than ever established in the affections of his subjects. A model Court of its kind is that of Luxemburg, with its gracious Royal Mistress, and her amiable *Grande Maîtresse*, Baronne de Preen, and her strikingly pretty lady-in-waiting, Baronne Apor.

Meanwhile the mourning for the late King put an almost entire stop to social life at The Hague. Even in private society mourning is more rigidly observed in Holland than in any other country I know. A widow for instance must not drive in an open carriage, and for two years after her bereavement she may pay no visits. When that period has elapsed, her cards are left on her friends by her nearest male relative, after which she may in a measure resume her old life, though at the risk perhaps of being thought somewhat worldly if she does so. These outward tokens of reverence for the dead—very different from our own practice, which tends more and more to diminish and shorten the observance of mourning—are a characteristic feature in Dutch life, and somehow seem to accord with all too often leaden-hued skies, and gloomy and severe—however earnest—forms of religious worship. They are, too, a part of the conservative attachment of the Netherlander to ancient customs and traditions. The *aanbidder*, in funereal garb of knee-breeches, white stockings, and high white neckcloth, who passes from door to door with black-edged announcements of the decease of some local worthy, and the big Dutch hearse with its driver and attendant mutes in long cloaks and wide-brimmed

seventeenth-century hats, are relics of the bygone age so vividly personified in the "pot-boilers" by Govaert Flinck or Backer—not to speak of Franz Hals and others—those splendid "Regenten" pieces, with the speaking groups of earnest, rather tiresome-looking, civic dignitaries, that people the walls of every Dutch museum.

The Court mourning made it impossible for me to present my new credentials to Queen Emma until the end of March, when, on my return from a short stay in England, I was able to deliver the specially affectionate messages with which the Queen, during a visit I had made by command to Windsor, had charged me for the widowed Regent. The earliest break that occurred in the strict seclusion of the Court was at the end of May, when Queen Emma took her daughter with her to Amsterdam and Rotterdam for the laying of the first stone of a hospital at the former, and of a new quay at the latter place. These public functions, although performed as quietly as possible, necessarily partook of a popular character, and, for the first time, brought the youthful Sovereign into touch with large numbers of the citizens of these great commercial centres, by whom she and the Queen Regent were enthusiastically welcomed, the little Queen, by her vivacity and intelligence, making an excellent impression upon all those who approached her.

No task, even though in this case it was a labour of love, could have been undertaken and carried to an end with greater personal solicitude than that to which the Queen Regent devoted herself of preparing the young Queen for her regal duties. From the first she gave herself up to it with complete self-abnegation. She made it a point, when possible, to assist at her daughter's lessons, scarcely let her out

of her sight, and shared the same bed-room with her until, at eighteen, Queen Wilhelmina attained her legal majority, and assumed the reins of government. The young Queen was most carefully educated; and equal pains were taken to develop her physically no less than intellectually. She soon took to riding and driving and other out-of-door exercises, was devoted to her dogs and horses, and grew up fresh and blooming and the very picture of health, with a strong will of her own and a fitting sense of her exalted rank and of the high destiny in store for her. When still quite a young girl she used to have small children's parties at the Palace at The Hague, to which among others the younger members of the diplomatic families were bidden. The invitation in our case, addressed to my wife, ran quaintly as follows: *Par ordre de la Reine Régente, Mlle. van de Poll prie Lady Rumbold de permettre à son fils Hugo de venir jouer avec Sa Majesté la Reine.* According to the accounts brought us by the boy thus privileged to be one of her playmates, the little Queen, while the most gracious of hostesses, could be the greatest of romps.

Certainly Queen Wilhelmina's childhood and first youth were wisely guarded and must have been truly happy in every respect. It is a curious and interesting circumstance that the tender years of the rulers of the two nations which, three centuries before, were locked in deadly struggle, should now, in our own times, have been left to the guidance of two such devoted and remarkable women as Queen Christina of Spain and Queen Emma of the Netherlands. The Dutch people owe Queen Emma a deep debt of gratitude, and it is satisfactory to know that her Majesty's popularity and the regard in which she is held have gone on increasing year by year.

But the seclusion of the Dutch Court was soon to be broken into by a Royal visit of no ordinary importance. In the course of the spring the German Emperor privately notified his wish to pay his respects to the two Queens when on his way to England in July. Nothing could be more cordial and complimentary than the proposal, and, having regard to the general character of the relations between the two countries, it was not without significance. There was no denying that a certain degree of distrust and apprehension of the great German neighbour had grown up in Holland ever since the victorious issue of the contest with France had made Germany the paramount military Power in Europe. At Berlin no pains had been spared to attenuate these impressions, and it was a singular fact that the improvement which had more recently shown itself in the intercourse between the two Governments coincided with the appointment some years before of the Iron Chancellor's son, Count Herbert Bismarck, to the mission at The Hague. Several causes of friction had then been removed by the adjustment of pending questions like those of the salmon fisheries in the Rhine, and the *surtaxes* levied on Dutch vessels engaged in the German coasting trade.

The arrangements for the Emperor William's visit, which was fixed for the 1st of July, were minutely gone into some weeks before. H.I.M. had announced his intention of coming by sea with the Empress to Ymuiden with a powerful naval escort, and wished to pass up the North Sea Canal to Amsterdam in his yacht the *Hohenzollern*. The measurements at first sent from Berlin of this large vessel unfortunately proved to be erroneous, it being finally only just discovered in time that she could barely

scrape through the locks. It was therefore settled that Their Majesties should transfer themselves for the canal passage to the smaller yacht the *Jagd*, which could be sent inside the lock. The Imperial party had to land and walk about 150 yards through a tent which had to be put up and decorated in a hurry. This, and the very large suite brought with him by the Emperor, which somewhat taxed the resources of the Dutch Court—especially as regards the stable department—at a time when, owing to the long illness of the King and the change of reign, that Court was in some degree disorganised—were the only, very slight, difficulties that attended an otherwise most successful and memorable visit. It was favoured by glorious weather, during which the aspect of one of the most picturesque of cities and the demeanour of its inhabitants could not fail to make a deep impression upon all who witnessed them.

Our friends the Laboucheres asked us to stay with them for the occasion, and, with a number of our colleagues and other people from The Hague, we saw the entry of the Imperial and Royal party from the windows of a *restaurant* at the corner of the great square on which stands the Royal Palace. An uneasy impression had got abroad, and was shared, it was said, by the Emperor himself, that although the reception given to him would be such as befitted the occasion, and would be in keeping with the traditions of an essentially decorous and hospitable people, it might, under the influence of the latent distrust I have referred to above, be wanting in cordiality. When, however, the Emperor was driven in state across the Dam to the Palace, with the little Queen by his side, there was a spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm from the surging crowd that filled the

square and the adjoining quays which plainly showed that all cautious reserve had been thrown aside, and the Amsterdammers were bent on giving the best of greetings to their Imperial visitors. It was in fact a triumphant welcome which gained in intensity as certain graceful acts on the part of the Emperor were noticed and bruited about, such as, during a tattoo of the massed military bands on the Palace Square, his remaining at the salute all through the performance of the Willemus National Anthem; his going on foot to the Nieuwe Kerk to deposit a wreath on the tomb of De Ruyter; and his laying special stress on his descent from Frederick Henry of Orange through the marriage of that national hero's daughter with the Great Elector.

There was a great Court dinner at the Palace, to which all the heads of the Foreign Missions were asked. This gave me the only opportunity I ever had of meeting the ruler who looms so large on the world's stage, and is perhaps the most interesting of living personalities. The Emperor was in a very gracious mood, and when I was presented to him, as we all were, in the *cercle* after dinner, by the Queen Regent herself, spoke warmly of the pleasure with which he looked forward to his visit to England. To the distinguished Dutch Admiral Casembroot, who had been attached to his person and addressed him in French, he at once replied in English, observing that he was a British Admiral and that English was the proper language for seamen. On comparing notes afterwards with my colleagues I found that the Emperor had, in each case, said to them what was most appropriate and most gratifying. Of the French Minister he inquired particularly after "His Excellency the President of the



Republic," eulogising the activity he showed in his tours in all parts of France, and little foreseeing that in the course of one of them M. Carnot was destined to be assassinated. To the Papal Internuncio he expressed admiration of the last Encyclical, being, he added, greatly pleased to find himself at one with His Holiness on "the social question," and, passing to the Italian Envoy, he spoke in highly cordial terms of the great promise shown by the young Prince of Naples, whom he had recently met for the first time. All through this function—which is in some degree a touchstone for all Princes—he showed unusual tact and aptness, and fully vindicated his reputation of being, when he chose, singularly captivating.

The Imperial visit was in every way a success. It was appropriately terminated by a magnificent display of fireworks on the basin of the Y, which we saw from a private steamer engaged by the Laboucheres, and our enjoyment of the striking scene would have been perfect had not the stillness of the hot summer night been torn by the deafening screams from the sirens of the steamboats plying to and fro with their cargoes of sightseers. Politically too, the visit was decidedly beneficial to the relations between the two countries, and proved the starting-point for the many attentions subsequently shown by the Emperor to the girl-Queen towards whom his attitude has since remained one of chivalrous solicitude.

In the autumn of this same year the Dutch Court had another interesting visitor in the person of the Prince of Naples. The Prince stayed a few days at The Hague, where I met him several times and was greatly struck by his quickness and intelligence, and,

for so young a man, his remarkable information on a variety of subjects. At that period he seemed very well disposed towards England, and certainly did me the honour of singling me out at a party at the Italian Legation and conversing with me most of the evening, somewhat to the exclusion of the other Foreign Representatives. We ourselves had a big reception in his honour, to which he kindly came after a fatiguing day of sight-seeing, including a luncheon party at the Loo, where a somewhat ludicrous incident had occurred. On the Queen Regent proposing H.R.H.'s health, the band struck up what its conductor evidently imagined to be the Italian National Anthem, but was simply that well-known old Neapolitan ditty "*Santa Lucia*," played in very slow, dirge-like time, to the, with some difficulty suppressed, amusement of the young Prince and his *suite*, among whom was a very old Turin acquaintance of mine, General Count Morra di Lavriano, who has since till recently been Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

I have said nothing thus far of the great summer resort of Scheveningen, which is perhaps too well known to require description. We found it a relatively primitive place, but it altered much and greatly improved in the course of the eight years we spent at The Hague. On the really fine summer evenings, which, with the changeable Dutch climate, can almost be counted, it offered an animated scene, always making allowance for the dreary stretch of beach, thickly covered with great hooded wicker chairs, and the still drearier outline of dunes that framed in a highly respectable, but by no means brilliant crowd, mostly drawn from the well-to-do German and Dutch burgher class. Our own people do not affect Scheveningen, and except the late Lady

Jersey, Lady Headfort, and Lady Edward Cavendish with one of her sons, I scarcely remember any English of note making a lengthened stay there. With Vienna society on the other hand Scheveningen is decidedly in favour, and there was generally a *coterie* of genial Austrians and Hungarians whom I had known before and was ere long to meet again. The late pompous old Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar—whom his brother-in-law, King William, could not, it was said, abide—was a regular visitor every year, and the Princess of Wied, who was the daughter of Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, and almost the last of the House of Orange, came there pretty often, as did one of the very nicest but shyest of Royal ladies, the Hereditary Grand Duchess Hilda of Baden.

Unfortunately the cost of living at Scheveningen, as indeed all over Holland, is decidedly high, and the hotels some ten years ago were big and expensive caravansaries affording but small comfort. The Curhaus itself, rebuilt, shortly before we arrived, on the site of a former one destroyed by fire, is, however, a fine building which redeemed its character as an hotel by its great Cursaal where the magnificent Philharmonic orchestra from Berlin gave the most interesting symphony concerts. The pretty woods that extend behind the desolate dunes to the gates of The Hague and, in particular, the ancient avenue known as the *Oude Weg*, shaded by splendid trees planted some two hundred and fifty years ago, are attractive features which no other seaside resort can boast of.

But it is only those who have known Scheveningen in severe winter weather who can realise how seriously exposed, were it not for the protection of its huge desolate ramparts of sand, would be the pretty woods,

and even the streets of the capital beyond them, to incursions from the ocean which lies barely three miles away. The level of The Hague happens in fact to be considerably lower than that of the shore-line; and close to the Plein, in the heart of the town, there stood, not long ago, a stone marking the furthestmost point reached by the flood that came pouring down the *Oude Weg*, through a gap in the dykes, in an exceptionally violent tempest in 1609. The water, it is chronicled, stood several feet high in some of the streets, and fish were caught in the low-lying quarters. I well remember our going down to Scheveningen one Sunday morning in February 1889, to look after the wants of the crew of a British three-master which was driven ashore at daybreak in a heavy gale from the north-east which lasted fully a week. The hands, twenty-two in number, had been all taken off by the plucky life-boatmen of the village and were lodged at the Curhaus. Nowhere, even on our own storm-swept coasts, have I seen a more raging sea, or been better able to gauge the force of wind than on this and other occasions at Scheveningen. A still more severe gale caught the fleet of picturesque *pinkens*,<sup>1</sup> while snugly laid up for the winter on the sands, the waves banging them about and driving them further up the shore, where they remained wrecked and disabled for weeks afterwards, to the great misery and impoverishment of the poor fisher-folk.

All Holland on skates, too, is an experience little known to the bulk of English visitors to that country. From one extremity of the kingdom to the other, every stream and canal is covered with skaters of all classes, swinging freely, with the Dutch roll, on

<sup>1</sup> The name given to the Scheveningen fishing-boats.

immensely long skates, turned up at the end, and frequently only loosely tied on with a mere piece of string. Across the snow-bound flat endless moving lines of them can be seen as far as the eye can reach in the low winter light. Half the marketing between town and country is done by them with hand-propelled sledges, and in the well-to-do classes the younger folk make expeditions to distant places, such as Amsterdam or Utrecht and back, the party on these occasions keeping in single file, and leaning, as they make their swinging, rhythmic stroke, on a long stout pole held at each end by the two strongest and safest skaters amongst them.

We had one or two very hard winters during our stay in Holland, exceptionally severe being that of 1894-95. For several weeks there was excellent skating in the private grounds at Oosterbeek and Clingendaal, where the Tuylls and Brienens kept the ice on their ponds in perfect condition. But by far the most interesting expedition we made was to Dordrecht, where the great river Maas was completely frozen over, a thing which had not happened for a great many years, though in the days of the old Dutch painters these Arctic seasons must have been of pretty frequent occurrence, to judge by the winter scenes that were such favourite subjects with Van Goyen, Molenaar, and others. The wide expanse of snow and ice was studded with booths where food and drink were for sale, and thronged with merry skaters of all ages: burghers with their wives and families, girls and children in bright peasant garb, and, passing through and scattering the crowd, sleighs with bells and jingling harness, the grey mass of the Dordrecht minster looming in the background through the winter mist. It was a

perfect embodiment of one of those old pictures, and, skating through this kermesse on the ice, one could easily fancy oneself back in the days when Dort and its fateful Synod engrossed the attention of the Protestant world. There is in truth a curiously unbroken continuity in these popular Dutch scenes, and the land of the Mynheers remains in not a few respects unchanged. On this skating trip we took with us, besides the sons we had at home, two of the four daughters of my Russian colleague, M. de Struve, a widower, who had succeeded my friend Count Kapnist. The eldest of these captivating little maids—they are all married now—kept house for her father, and managed her gay, turbulent sisters quite admirably, although she was barely nineteen. For the gilded youth of The Hague the cheery, hospitable Struve home in the Korte Voorhout was a real godsend.

Two of our winters were unexpectedly darkened by mournful events. It was at the wedding of M. van Haeften's second daughter with the eldest son of my Belgian colleague, Baron d'Anethan, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs took me aside and showed me a telegram he had that moment received announcing the death of the Duke of Clarence. I was the more shocked that the day before I had, at the request of Queen Emma, wired to the Foreign Office for news of the Prince, and not having received any answer, had no idea of the gravity of the case. The greatest possible sympathy was called forth in all classes of Dutch society by the painful circumstances attending the event. We were overwhelmed with visits and messages of condolence even from people with whom we

had no personal acquaintance—deputies, artists and professors amongst them—while the veteran Dutch poet, Nicolas Beets, gave voice to the general feeling in a touching poem of which I sent a copy to the Duke of Teck. An official memorial service was held at our pretty English Church in the Boschstraat,<sup>1</sup> at which places were of course reserved for the representatives of the Queen Regent and the Court, the Dutch Ministers and the Diplomatic Corps; all the foremost private seats, including our own, being given up for that purpose, and the main body of the church being left free for the general public who attended in large numbers. Sir George Bonham, who had now joined as First Secretary on Mr. Fenton's retirement, and the other gentlemen of the Legation, saw to every one being properly seated, and the whole service, with the musical part of which we had taken special pains, was conducted with great decorum and was very impressive. It so happened, however, that an English lady connected with the Court, but whom no one belonging to the Legation knew even by sight, was, entirely by accident, kept out of her habitual seat, which, as afterwards appeared, she looked upon as an intentional slight, and resented, with consequences that in the end proved very far reaching. But here I am anticipating, and will only add that I have good cause to remember that memorial service.

Having, however, referred to church matters, I may take this opportunity for saying that, according to my experience, one of the most troublesome of

<sup>1</sup> The church was built by Mr. Tinné, a Liverpool merchant of Dutch extraction, partly in memory of a sister of his who had been murdered by a fanatical tribe when engaged on an adventurous journey in the Soudan.

the duties that fall to the lot of British representatives abroad is that of looking after the chaplaincies at their respective places of residence. At The Hague, for instance, I found on my arrival a venerable chaplain of the name of Brine—a distinguished Greek scholar and in many ways a remarkable man—but who, having held the appointment for nearly forty years, was well past his work. His health entirely broke down at this time, but as he was generally respected, and had the best reasons for not resigning his post, it became necessary to provide a temporary substitute. This was no easy matter, and, besides entailing upon me endless correspondence with clergymen at home, once or twice actually reduced me to drawing The Hague hotels at the week's end for a stray parson to take the service. I remember similar difficulties at Stockholm and at Athens, and not to speak of the objections which were frequently offered by members of the congregation to the manner in which the services were conducted, there was the still graver question of obtaining the subscriptions indispensable for the support of the church. The British Minister is in fact saddled with most of the responsibilities, without the patronage, of an unendowed living. At The Hague I was fortunate at last in securing the services of the present Legation chaplain and my very good friend, the Rev. H. Ratford, who has done excellent work among the congregation, and is deservedly popular even with many of the best Dutch families, several of whom now attend his church.

Early on Christmas eve of 1893 I received an alarming telegram from Florence about my brother



William. He had long been in indifferent health, and had never entirely got over the loss of his wife, Nadine Lobanow,<sup>1</sup> but the last accounts of him had given no cause for immediate anxiety. We left for Italy at once that afternoon without any servants, travelling all through Christmas day and only breaking the journey for a couple of hours at Milan the following evening. Thence on by the night-mail to Florence, which we reached in the early winter daylight. We arrived too late, however, for at the Villino Cusumano, where my brother had lived, in an out-of-the-way corner of the town, we learned that he had passed away in the course of the night. He had been the companion of my childhood and youth, but my necessarily roving diplomatic life had long separated us, and we had not met for a good many years which, for him, poor fellow, had been troublous ones, making a sad ending to what at first had bid fair to be a brilliant life. He was the most pleasant and agreeable of companions, full of wit and fancy, and in these respects much resembled our gifted cousin Edmond de Polignac. We buried him in the Russo-Greek cemetery at Leghorn near his Russian wife who had died there three years before. Looking through his papers and settling his affairs kept us a week in Florence in bitter, sunless weather, during which I met for the last time my very old friend Charles de Talleyrand<sup>2</sup> and his wife, and also his cousin the old Duc de Dino, who had all been

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. pp. 185-187.

<sup>2</sup> The Baron de Talleyrand had been French Ambassador in Russia. See "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. pp. 221-223, and vol. ii. pp. 242-243, 258, 265-266, 270, 304.

intimate with my brother and had shown him much kindness.

We were glad to turn our backs on Florence, which, after the many bright days I had formerly known there, had now for me none but mournful recollections. On our homeward way we passed a day or two at Nice, with the La Rochefoucaulds who were wintering there, and at Paris, to see our friends the Malaspinas who had some time before been transferred thither from The Hague. We took great interest in the Malaspina *ménage*, having from the first watched the Italian Secretary's attachment for Mlle. Louise de Zuylen, who, with her sister, Madame Van der Staal, was among the most intimate of our friends in Holland. The husbands of both these ladies have since distinguished themselves in diplomacy; the Marquis Malaspina having till quite recently been Italian Ambassador at Constantinople, while M. van der Staal now holds the blue ribbon of the Dutch Diplomatic Service in the Legation at Brussels.

At Paris I had a long talk with Lord Dufferin, and was much concerned, I remember, at the somewhat desponding view he took of our relations with France, which he had certainly done his very utmost to improve. I was still more impressed, when dining *en famille* the same evening with the Doudeauvilles, by the suspicions which the Duc, for whom I have a great regard, scarcely attempted to conceal from me of unfriendly sentiments towards France on the part of our Embassy. Lord Dufferin's correspondence at that period unquestionably betrayed some anxiety, and indeed manifested fears of matters taking a serious turn between us and France in the event of any general complication

arising. This seems to me worth mentioning as an instance of how deeply rooted still were in France, some ten years ago, those feelings of distrust and of traditional animosity against us which have been now, it may be hoped, overcome for good.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE HAGUE, 1892-1894—SUMMER IN HOLLAND

WERE it not for the fickleness of the Dutch climate—on which I may possibly seem to harp unduly—nowhere would the best months of the year be more enjoyable than in Holland. Although, when it is fine, it is sometimes intoxicatingly so, the genial influences of spring and summer have great difficulty in getting, and still more in keeping, the upper hand. No more interesting struggle can be watched than that between a vigorous vegetation, favoured by superabundant moisture, and the blighting action of froward, inclement skies. The beautiful hyacinths, for instance—soon to be replaced by the tulips—that turn the ground of certain districts round The Hague, and the entire neighbourhood of Haarlem, into a gorgeous carpet where all the colours of the rainbow run riot, for “all too short a date,” almost invariably come out under leaden skies or in the teeth of a nipping east wind. It was piteous to see the glorious glowing blossoms shiver and shake through half their brief lives, only in the end to be ignominiously consigned to the dunghill. When we first went to Holland there was so little market for these lovely flowers, that in the fields at well-named Bloemendal could be seen cut hyacinths in great odorous mounds reaching half-way up the walls of the farm-buildings, and left there to decay as mere refuse. The blooms which now easily find

their way to Covent Garden, were then quite worthless in Holland, and we often brought home from the Wassenaer gardens, on the Leyden road, great baskets full of gorgeous tulips which the owner was only too glad to part with for a florin.

None the less in Holland there is a wonderful *renouveau*—to borrow the expressive French word—which is nowhere more enchanting, when spring has at last asserted itself, than on the same umbrageous road to Leyden. The highway to that ancient seat of learning runs, for several miles after leaving the Haagsche Bosch, between the old-world grounds and parks of the Prince of Wied, the Lyndens, Oudermeulens, Stirums, and other wealthy owners, which are not screened from view by unsightly walls, but are bounded only by ditches and luxuriant hedges topped with the finest timber. The lilac bushes toss their fragrant sprays across the grassy slopes that line the road, and bright clumps of rhododendron here and there overhang it. The thickets are resonant with bird-calls, and the “piping clear of merry thrush” and blackbird proclaim the advent of May almost more lustily than in our English groves and lanes. Even the wearisome Dutch stretches of meadow lose some of their monotony and put on a beauty of their own under a summer sky, the rich verdure and the cloudless vault above producing a pleasingly restful symphony in blue and green.

I have many pleasant memories of our summers in Holland, where Lord Reay had kindly prepared the way for us with his kinsfolk and his many friends. Among these—besides his distinguished cousin, Baron Mackay, who was Prime Minister when I arrived, but was succeeded in 1892 by M. Tak

van Poortvliet with a Radical Government—there was the late Baron de Brantsen, with whom, and with his wife and charming only child and heiress, since married to Count C. von der Goltz, we soon established the most cordial relations. We paid a good many visits to the Brantsens at their place in Gelderland, close to Arnhem. The Zyp is a typical Dutch manor-house of the beginning of the seventeenth century, surrounded by a deep moat where the ducks come quacking under the dining-room windows to be fed. It stands in a good-sized park, with much broken, well-timbered ground, and is altogether a dignified and most enjoyable place. Nothing can be prettier than the whole of the country round Arnhem, with its mixture of purple moor and hill-sides clad with splendid beech-woods, and grand views over the fertile plains of the Betuwe and the valley of the Rhine. The district contains a number of pleasant country houses, the homes of Pallandts, Bentincks, Heeckerens, and other leading families of the Dutch aristocracy. Middachten, the seat of Count William Bentinck, with many traditions of William III. and Queen Mary, is a large and stately place, as is also Amerongen, which belongs to his younger brother Count Godard. We were taken many drives by the Brantsens along the well-kept, shady roads to see these and other sights of the neighbourhood. One of them is the old castle of Doorwerth, which, although deserted by its owners, still remains in a complete state of preservation, and is a very interesting specimen of mediæval work, with massive double towers mirrored in the moat that runs right round it and is fed by the Rhine hard by. A truly charming liveable country is Gelderland, and among my recollections of The Hague there are none that give

me greater pleasure than those of the summer or autumn days we spent at the hospitable manor-house of that perfect specimen of a Dutch gentleman of the best school, the last Baron Brantsen van de Zyp.

A very pleasant visit, too, we made in the June of our last summer in Holland to La Forêt, the country house, near Utrecht, of the Louis van Loons who are closely connected with the banking-house of Hope of Amsterdam. Besides our hostess, Mme. Adèle van Loon, there were the wives of the two other Van Loon brothers, and I can scarcely ever remember meeting in any family three prettier women than this trio of sisters-in-law, the palm to my mind being due to Mme. William van Loon, *née* Egidius, the Norwegian wife of the eldest of the three brothers. The party were specially asked for the occasion of a great tournament got up by the students of the University of Utrecht, to which we were all taken in a well-turned-out coach and other smart carriages. The pageant, which was honoured by both the Queens, who came to it from the Castle of Soesdyck, was a great success; the jousting and tilting at the ring being extremely well managed, and the armour and horse-trappings of the knights very splendid and historically correct. An unfortunate *contretemps* happened to young Count \*\*\* (an exceedingly nice fellow, and the best match in Holland), to whom the principal part as King of Bohemia had been assigned. Just as he was entering the arena with the whole of his court and retinue, his charger, being scared by the band, bolted and threw its rider, so that the poor young fellow had to walk on foot in the procession to his royal tent at the further end of the lists.

But I have given more than enough space to these notes of summer in hospitable Holland. We were so close to England at The Hague that friends came frequently to stay with us at the roomy Legation. Among our guests at various times were the Bishop of Ely and Lady Alwyne Compton with her niece Miss Florence Anderson. Cheery Admiral "Rim" Macdonald also came to us, as well as Miss "Cossy" Graham; and the Dowager Lady Lonsdale and a very old Madeira friend of my wife's, Miss Hinton; while Lady Adelaide Taylour stayed with us for some time. Of a number of other travellers passing through, or staying at, The Hague, I remember my cousin, William Levinge,<sup>1</sup> who had come to Amsterdam in the yacht *Dolphin* with his Sutton brothers-in-law; the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn; the late Lord Arran and his son; and the Evelyn Ashleys. The Duke of Westminster, with his charming Duchess, made a longer stay, chiefly devoted to visiting the picture-galleries under the guidance of that eminent authority on Dutch art Doctor Bredius. The Duke afterwards sent several pictures from Grosvenor House on loan to the Mauritshuis, one of which—a small Paul Potter—quite eclipsed for a time the celebrated bull.

And this visit of the Westminsters reminds me that, being two years afterwards (in June 1893) on a week-end visit to Cliveden, the Duke, on our arrival there, told us that he had just concluded an arrangement for the sale of that lovely place, the sum offered to him for it being such as, with a second family growing up, he did not feel justified in refusing. He made no concealment of the great wrench it was to him, and spoke at the same time somewhat bitterly of certain

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir William Levinge, Bart., of Knockdrin Castle, Co. Westmeath.



pretensions put forward by the purchaser to the possession of one or two family *souvenirs* in the house. It so happened that some weeks later we came over again for a few days on business, when the heat in London on a certain Sunday in August was so insufferable—the empty town being wrapped in a thick haze almost resembling a November fog—that we escaped from it to Maidenhead, and spent the afternoon in a boat on the river. Towards evening as we lay in the shade of the trees almost opposite Cliveden, we noticed a pair-oar putting off from there with a lady and some children. Presently, as the boat neared us, we saw that it contained the Duchess, who, on recognising us, came alongside and told us that it was her last day at Cliveden, which she was leaving for good the next morning. Beautiful Cliveden—the pearl of the river, and quite unique among properties of its kind—one could well imagine with how sad a heart its mistress was bidding it farewell.

In that same summer of 1893 there came, too, the Duke and Duchess of Leinster who, like the Westminsters, were on a tour of the Dutch galleries. They dined with us, in travelling clothes, I remember, the evening they went back to England by the new Hook of Holland route, and, having myself to go to London on urgent business, I crossed over with them. For various reasons that short journey is still present to my memory. I had formerly known very well the family of the Duchess, who was certainly at this time the most beautiful woman in English society, and I could not have had pleasanter travelling companions. I parted from them at the Liverpool Street station, much looking forward to meeting them again before long. In December of that year the Duke

died after a very short illness, his lovely widow following him in less than eighteen months.

Many changes took place in course of time in our Legation and in the diplomatic set in general. The friendly, hospitable Bonhams, at whose engagement years ago at St. Petersburg I had so to speak assisted, and their pretty daughter, now the wife of Mr. Evelyn Grant Duff, left us and were succeeded by the "Mungo" Herberts, a delightful couple whose stay at The Hague was unfortunately but short. Charles des Graz joined the Legation about the same time, and later on Bryan Clarke Thornhill, one of the most entertaining of men and the very best of good fellows. At the French Legation the Legrands were replaced by M. Bihourd, now Ambassador at Berlin, and the Comte de Ségur and his wife, who were universally liked, were transferred to Vienna. M. Legrand had represented France at The Hague for thirteen years, and only left it on his appointment to the *Conseil d'Etat*. Baron \* \* \*, who was well known for his want of tact, thought it right on meeting my French colleague, to condole with him on his retirement, saying: "*Mais c'est un enterrement!*" "*Non pas!*" was the ready reply, "*c'est une exhumation!*" We had, too, a succession of American Ministers; Mr. Roosevelt, a cousin of the actual President, being followed by my excellent colleague Mr. Samuel R. Thayer, of Minneapolis, and, after him, by Mr. Quinby.

The effect of these diplomatic shuffles was to make us respectively *doyen* and *doyenne* of the *corps*, which placed us in more immediate relations with the officials of the Court, the *doyen* becoming on occasion the spokesman of his colleagues in questions of ceremonial and etiquette, and the *doyenne* having to apply for and assist

at the audiences of presentation of the diplomatic ladies, communicating for that purpose directly with the Grande Maîtresse or Mistress of the Robes, who was then the Baronne de Hardenbroek, a very handsome woman, *très grande dame*, and looking the part to perfection. An amusing incident occurred one day when my wife had to present to the Queen Regent an American lady whose first visit to Europe it was. Nothing could be kinder or more gracious than Queen Emma at these audiences, and when on this occasion everybody was seated, and the Queen had said a few words to the lady in question, she naturally turned to, and talked chiefly with my wife, whom she knew well. During a short pause in the conversation the American lady—who was immediately facing the Regent, and probably felt rather out of it—suddenly pointed to the wall over H.M.'s head and said, with a high-pitched voice and an unmistakable accent: "I see you have a very good picture of your little girl up there!" much, I need scarcely say, to the amusement and astonishment of the Queen.

The most important of our diplomatic changes was the departure of the German Envoy, Baron Saurma, and the appointment, in his stead, of Count Rantzau, the son-in-law of the ex-Chancellor Prince Bismarck. I was from the first on the best of terms with my new German colleague. He was full of humour, and of a hearty, cordial disposition, a good sportsman and an admirable host. At his table I remember sampling wines from the cellars of his illustrious father-in-law of a quality quite unknown to the wine-trade, these being offerings sent to the Prince by patriotic owners of vineyards on the Rhine, or in the Palatinate, in token of their admiration for the restorer of the Empire. Count Rantzau came to The Hague from a very

desirable post at Munich, whence he had been ousted to make room for his subordinate, Count Philip Eulenburg, whom I subsequently had for my colleague at Vienna. Even a man of his genial temperament could not but feel aggrieved by the circumstances of his removal. He nevertheless held his post at The Hague for nearly four years, during which time interesting echoes from Friedrichsruh occasionally reached me through him. The studied neglect with which the "hermit of the Sachsenwald" was treated for so long after his fall—mostly due to the hostile influence of the permanent officials, the "*vortragenden Rätthe*," at Berlin, who had accumulated stores of ill-will and resentment during the long years of the Chancellor's stern, imperious sway; the advances subsequently made to him, and the reconciliation so skilfully put on the stage on the memorable eightieth birthday, when, with what might almost be called a cruel irony, the ex-Chancellor was persistently referred to as a distinguished warrior and general, and no allusion whatever made to his wonderful work in building up Imperial Germany—on all these and other incidents of the great breach, side-lights were now and then unconsciously thrown by my colleague, who was devoted to his wife's father. When Count Rantzau finally resigned, on the ostensible motive that Prince Bismarck, since his bereavement, could not do without his daughter, he was accorded none of the distinctions usually conferred on retiring Ministers. He was not given any of the customary decorations, and the official notification of his retirement was not even accompanied by the stereotyped phrase about his meritorious services. He was replaced at The Hague by my fellow-labourer in the Greek vineyard, Baron de Brincken.

In looking through old jottings of that period I come across what, viewed in the light of actual events, are not uninteresting references to Japan. Admiral Casembroot—the last naval commander who had led Dutch ships into action, and was popularly known as the hero of Shimonoseki for the gallant manner in which he had forced the passage of that name—died in the spring of 1893 and was buried with great honours. His death, almost coinciding with the conclusion of the war between China and Japan, contributed to draw more particular attention in Holland to the trend of events in the Far East and to the complete change brought about there by the triumph of Japan. It is curious to note the apprehension with which, as far back as nine years ago, some of the shrewdest observers in Holland looked upon the growth of Japanese power. Spain, it was pointed out in one of the ablest of the Dutch papers, was taking measures for the protection of the Philippines now that Formosa had fallen into Japanese hands, and Formosa, which once upon a time had been Dutch, was not so very much further removed from the Moluccas and Borneo. It surely behoved Holland to see to strengthening her forces in those regions. Such being the views and fears entertained at that time, how anxious may well appear at the present day the future outlook for Holland, as well as for all other countries that hold a stake of any importance in Oceania. It might, it seems to me, make us look twice before committing ourselves to a renewal of the Treaty which binds us to the Nippon Empire, and still more to an extension of its scope.

Remarkable, too, were the evidences to be observed, ten or fifteen years ago, of the keen interest

with which the course of affairs in South Africa was watched in the Netherlands. The tone of the Dutch press during our differences with Portugal at the beginning of January 1890 was extremely anti-English; even such a sober, Conservative organ as the *Dagblad* referring to the ultimatum presented at Lisbon as "a sample of the bad manners which the British are apt to indulge in towards weaker Powers." The fact is, to speak frankly, that the Dutch as a nation have good cause not to love us. Not only have we supplanted them on the seas as the chief carriers of the commerce of the world, and deprived them of such splendid possessions as Ceylon and Cape Colony, but we took a leading part in the arrangements under which Belgium was severed from Holland. These are bitter memories which, although fortunately not influencing the general relations between the two countries, in some degree explain, even if they do not justify, the passionate line afterwards taken by the Dutch of all classes during the great contest in South Africa. But quite apart from this latent sense of, so to speak historical, wrongs sustained at our hands, there were at work in Holland, long before the complications that immediately led to the war, active agencies whose aim and interest it was to foster and support the Dutch South African communities in their attempt to guard their national existence from the encroachments of the rising Anglo-Saxon tide. The task of helping to stem the flood, besides being a congenial one to the dyke-building Dutch, offered a tempting opening to the youth of their upper middle-class, whose energies scarcely found sufficient scope within the narrow borders of the Netherlands. For a good many years past a certain proportion of the output of the Dutch

universities and technical colleges—students of law or divinity, teachers, engineers, electricians and others—had found their way to the Orange Free State or the Transvaal, where they in great degree supplied the higher needs of the rougher and less cultured denizens of those Republics. Although by no means popular with the native Boer element, these Hollanders had necessarily acquired the influence and authority due to men of superior training. It of course became an object with them to get fresh recruits from the mother country, and before long they founded a Netherlands Association (*Nederlandsche Vereeniging*) at Pretoria and Johannesburg, the funds of which were devoted to the encouragement of Dutch immigration and the extension of the commercial relations with Holland. Another powerful agency was the Transvaal Railway, the seat of which was at Amsterdam, while the line itself was worked almost entirely by Dutchmen. The presence of German men-of-war at the inauguration of that line in 1894 was hailed with satisfaction by an extreme section of the Dutch press as a demonstration intended to check possible British designs on Lourenço Marquez. So charged indeed with danger seemed the atmosphere fourteen years ago, that, writing in June 1891, the Pretoria correspondent of a leading Dutch paper described the situation as certain before long to lead to an armed struggle between the Dutch and British elements.

To return to my jottings, they show that, besides watching and reporting upon these and other questions affecting our interests, I had to attend to the settlement of Anglo-Dutch boundaries in Borneo and New Guinea; the conditions of the employment of

our East Indian coolies in Dutch Guiana; Sugar Bounties and Liquor Trade Conventions, and many other questions arising out of the extensive commercial relations of both countries. In dealing with these affairs I invariably met with the most perfect courtesy on the part of M. Hartsen and of his successors at the Foreign Office, M. Tienhoven and Jonkheer van Roëll, as well as from their *chefs du cabinet*, M. van der Staal and M. Ruysenaers.

A troublesome question which arose during the last years of my stay at The Hague deserves for certain reasons more particular mention. In November 1891 the master of the whaling barque *Costa Rica Packet* of Sydney, New South Wales, a man named Carpenter, was arrested by the Dutch authorities at Ternate, the principal Residency in the Molucca Islands, on a charge of theft, which later on, it was sought to magnify into piracy, and was thence conveyed to a gaol at Macassar, in the great spider-like island of Celebes, where he was treated with much harshness and indignity, until finally released on the interposition of our Consul at Batavia. The act for which the man was arrested had taken place on the 24th of January 1888, or nearly four years before, and consisted in his having appropriated the cargo—composed of several cases of mostly damaged spirits and a tin of petroleum, of the total value of about £18—of a derelict native *prauw*, which he had met, waterlogged and abandoned by her crew, off the island of Boeroe, and, as was afterwards conclusively established, quite outside the Dutch territorial waters. Captain Carpenter had transferred the paltry cargo to his vessel, but, finding that some of his crew had got drunk on the contents



of the cases, he ordered the whole of the spirits to be thrown overboard. He then reported all the circumstances at the first Dutch port he stopped at. A claimant to the cargo subsequently came forward, and an official inquiry was held, the whole matter, however, being soon allowed to drop. Nearly four years later the affair was unexpectedly taken up again by a newly-appointed and over-zealous Dutch official, and a warrant was then issued against Carpenter who, as I have said above, was arrested during one of his cruises among the Dutch islands.

The case caused great excitement at Sydney, where Carpenter was well known, and it was strongly commented upon in the New South Wales Legislature. A claim for damages and compensation, which I was instructed to present at The Hague, was, after endless correspondence, referred to arbitration. The Emperor of Russia was requested to arbitrate, and finally an award which was in complete accordance with the British contention was given by that eminent international jurist M. de Martens. I had taken great interest in this affair, and, as far as I was personally concerned, had permitted myself, while of course bound by my instructions, to urge upon our Authorities at the Foreign Office my view of its importance from an Imperial standpoint, being convinced that any show of indifference on our part about an incident which had so thoroughly roused our Australian fellow-subjects was much to be deprecated. There could be no question as to the high-handed character of the proceedings against the master of the *Costa Rica Packet*, and, by a strange chance, the incident resembled the *Tacna* affair, which had given me so much to do in Chile;<sup>1</sup> it being a cardinal feature

<sup>1</sup> "Further Recollections of a Diplomatist," pp. 35-36, 60-71, 81.

in both cases that the criminal acts imputed had taken place on the high seas, and beyond the limits of any local maritime jurisdiction. Before leaving this matter I may mention that a little over two years ago—when my name was brought somewhat prominently before the public in connection with an article I had contributed to the *National Review*<sup>1</sup>—I received a letter from a well-known member of the New South Wales Legislature, with whom I had no acquaintance, thanking me in the kindest terms for the line I had personally taken in the *Costa Rica Packet* incident, and going even so far as to assert that, in the writer's opinion, the efficient protection afforded to the captain of a Colonial vessel had contributed towards making Australia so essentially staunch and loyal to us in the war in South Africa. Nothing could be more gratifying than the generous approval of my distinguished correspondent at the Antipodes, but I must disclaim having done more than my duty in a question where I had simply followed the lead of such a man as Lord Jersey, at that time Governor of New South Wales, who had warmly taken up the Carpenter case on its own merits as well as on Imperial grounds. It has, I confess, been a satisfaction to me since then to know that the finding of perhaps the greatest living authority on international law was partly based upon a memorandum I had drawn up on the case in French.

It was about this time that, feeling very depressed over my diplomatic prospects, I was induced by des Graz, the kindest-hearted of men, to try for distraction the game of golf, which he had lately introduced at The Hague, and which has proved a solace to men in

<sup>1</sup> "An English Tribute to the Emperor Francis Joseph."

far greater trouble than mine. Although we never became proficient at golf, both my wife and I took to it very kindly, and drove most days to the nine-hole links which Baron de Brien en had laid out round his picturesque race-course at Clingendaal. Many an exhilarating game did we play, losing innumerable balls in a certain rough wood by the fifth hole, and in the ditches that intersect the links. How well I recollect it all, and how delightful was the fresh, salt air blowing in from the downs close by! Golf became quite the rage in Dutch society at this time, and the fashion extended from The Hague to provincial centres. A pretty club-house was put up at Clingendaal, and we had interesting competitions—in which Mlle. Daisy de Brien en distinguished herself, as did also my gunner-son—and cheery club luncheons, where as Honorary President of the Club I had sometimes to take the chair. Des Graz, who had made himself an exceptional position among the best people at The Hague, may well claim it as a feather in his cap that he was the first to introduce this fascinating pastime to their notice.

## CHAPTER XV

THE HAGUE, 1895-1896—LAST DAYS IN HOLLAND

MEANTIME the years sped on and promotion came neither from the East nor from the West. In the space of less than four years no less than five Embassies which became vacant were given to men junior to me in the service, and I was left at the head of the list of Envoys, and thus—so I put it to one of our Foreign Secretaries—pilloried as it were for incompetence.

It had now in fact become so evident that I was being systematically passed over that I determined if possible to discover the cause of my disfavour, and at last, during a short visit to London in the early spring of 1894, I learned from a foreign diplomatic friend what was being said about me. The story went, that I had been mixed up in a disgraceful “row” at The Hague. I had endeavoured one day, it was said, to force my way to the platform of the railway station, on the occasion of some official reception where everybody was in uniform—being myself in plain clothes—and had insisted, on the strength of my privileged character, on being allowed to pass. Finally, the *employé* still refusing to admit me, I had straightway knocked him down! Such was the strange tale related to me which, I was further assured, had been talked about in London for upwards of a year, and was credited even in exalted circles.

Now it so happened that five years before, not

long after my arrival at The Hague, when I was constantly going to and from Amsterdam for Dr. Metzger's treatment, I did have an unpleasant affair at the railway station. I was coming back to The Hague one afternoon with a return ticket which I gave up at the wicket. My brougham was waiting for me outside in full view of the said wicket, and I was about to jump in when the footman told me that my wife and child had come to meet me, and had gone up to the arrival platform where in the crowd I had missed them. I turned back to find them, and made for the wicket through which I had passed only a few seconds before. When I reached it, the ticket-collector said something in Dutch—a language which at that time I only imperfectly understood. I told him in German that I had just passed through, that I was simply going back to fetch my wife, and, as he still seemed to demur, explained who I was. I then passed on, when the man seized me from behind by the collar and pulled me back in the roughest possible way. I of course turned round and shook him off, and not understanding why he stopped me so rudely, repeated that I was the "Englische Gesandter," again trying to pass on, whereupon the fellow barred the way, and hit out at me. I had little difficulty in warding off his clumsy fists, and, in the midst of this absurd encounter, my wife appeared on the scene. I was naturally much incensed, and, calling the policeman on duty outside, insisted on the ticket-collector going with me to the station-master, before whom I lodged a formal complaint, giving my full name and description. Only then did I ascertain that non-travellers unprovided with ordinary tickets (I had just given up mine) were not admitted into the station without a *perronkaartje* or platform ticket—

a regulation of which I was entirely unaware, having been only a short time in Holland. I now drove straight to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Hartsen, and recounted to him the whole occurrence. He expressed the greatest regret, and promised to attend to the affair at once. I ought, indeed, never to have heard again of an incident which, as I said to the Minister, was the result of a *consigne mal exécutée*. Nevertheless the story, grossly distorted, got about at The Hague and was thence transmitted to London, where it was further embellished. I of course took immediate steps to let influential friends at home know the rights of the matter, but was none the less bitterly annoyed by the version which was current of it.

Far worse, however, was yet to come. A year later, in the spring of 1895, a Dutch lady of high position with whom we were on intimate terms, returned from a long official stay abroad. She had seen a great deal of one of our Ambassadors, and, in conversation with him, had kindly mentioned my wife and myself as being popular and well thought of at The Hague, observing at the same time that some surprise was felt at my not being further promoted. To this the Ambassador replied that, after a certain unpleasant incident at the Dutch Court, it could not well be otherwise. The lady then inquiring to what the Ambassador alluded, he said it was well known that I had had a violent altercation with one of the officials at some Court function, and had very nearly come to blows with him. The lady at once indignantly denied the truth of the story, laying stress on the fact that if such a thing had occurred, she must have heard of it at the time. The Ambassador, nevertheless, shrugged his shoulders, and maintained the

accuracy of his account. On hearing this extraordinary statement from my friend, who added that she thought it only right I should know what was being reported about me, I mentioned it to one of my staff, who said that, since I alluded to it, he must tell me that in the south of France, the winter before, this supposed incident at Court had been spoken of to a mutual friend of ours (now dead) by a person of the highest station, as being the legitimate cause of the prejudice against me, and that when our friend utterly denied that anything of the sort had taken place, the personage in question had insisted that he knew it for a fact.

In view of the character of these statements, I felt bound to bring the matter to the knowledge of the Queen Regent. A gentleman of her household (now one of the great officers of State) and Baron Clifford, the *Maréchal de la Cour*, both great friends of ours, very kindly undertook to inform H.M. of what had occurred. Queen Emma at once sent me the most gracious messages as to the concern and annoyance with which she had heard of these fabrications, together with assurances that on her approaching visit to England she would take good care to contradict and dispose of these injurious assertions—a promise which H.M. kept to the full. Indeed nothing could exceed the kindness and sympathy she showed me on the occasion.

And now I have done with much the most painful occurrence of my long career, and will only add that to this day I am unable to understand why, if these stories of misconduct on my part were believed, I should not at once, in common fairness, have been charged point-blank with them, and thus given an opportunity either of explaining them or proving

their falsehood. As to the growth of the myth, it was evident that the railway ticket-collector had been raised to the dignity of a Court Chamberlain, while I am probably not far wrong in tracing its origin to an apparently insignificant circumstance on which I have touched lightly in the preceding pages.

The Royal visit to London took place in the spring of 1895. The meeting between her late Majesty and the young Dutch Sovereign, then in her fifteenth year, was in itself a highly interesting event, and though the two Dutch Queens observed the strictest *incognito*, everything was done to make their sojourn both agreeable and instructive. As for the young Queen, she captivated all who saw her by her charming countenance sparkling with fun and intelligence, and by the child-like simplicity with which she enjoyed everything. Her visits to the Tower and the museums and picture galleries, the shopping in Bond Street, and, above all, a drive through the city in a hansom cab, which she insisted upon, afforded infinite delight to the bright girl-Queen, who, so went the gossip of the day, asked her late Majesty at Windsor whether she, too, did not love going in a hansom. We came in for our share of the Royal hospitalities, dining at Marlborough House to meet the Queen Regent, and also with the two Queens at Brown's Hotel in Dover Street where they were staying, besides later on receiving a command to dine and sleep at Windsor Castle, when it became evident that Queen Emma had more than fulfilled the promise she had made to me. There still seemed every likelihood that I might be left on at The Hague until the date of my compulsory retirement, but I had ceased to feel that I was living under a sinister and mysterious cloud, and I no longer fought a disheartening fight with windmills.



With the winter of 1895-96 there came a general intimation that, in view of the approaching visit of Queen Emma's youngest sister, Princess Elizabeth of Waldeck Pyrmont (since married to the hereditary Count of Erbach-Schönberg), H.M. might during the season be disposed to accept a few invitations to private houses. We inquired whether it would be agreeable to her to come to a ball at the Legation, and, receiving a favourable reply, did our best to make this a successful entertainment. In graciously assenting to our proposal the Queen Regent sent me word that she would be glad if her acceptance of the hospitality of the *Doyen* and *Doyenne* of the Diplomatic Corps were looked upon as a general compliment to my colleagues as well as to myself. For a number of years no diplomatic house at The Hague had been thus honoured—neither Queen Sophie nor the late King having ever attended any diplomatic receptions—so that the exceptional compliment paid us by the Queen Regent gave our ball a special interest which was most unfortunately heightened by the arrival of the news of the Jameson raid in South Africa. The first telegram on the subject, giving only the baldest of outlines of the occurrence, reached The Hague from Berlin on the 31st of December, and produced a sensation which at once found expression in violent articles in the Dutch papers, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* taking the lead in the attacks upon England. Our ball was fixed for the 6th January, and there was much speculation in society as to whether the Queen Regent would, under the circumstances, come to it, the betting, so to speak, being against her doing so. H.M., nevertheless, not only came and was as gracious as possible, but, in order not to disappoint

us, postponed the announcement of a slight Court mourning until the following day, besides putting off to a later date a ball which was to be given in her honour by her Mistress of the Robes, Baronne de Hardenbroek.

The crazy, bungled raid, followed by the Imperial telegram of congratulation to President Krüger and the storm of resentment called forth in England by that message, roused public opinion in sober Holland to a pitch of unparalleled excitement. The interests of the South African Republic in Europe were at that period confided to the late M. Beelaerts van Blokland, a deputy for Gelderland and owner of a small estate near Arnhem, and a somewhat prominent member of the so-called Anti-Revolutionary, rigidly Calvinist, party. M. Beelaerts at one time anomalously combined the dignity of President of the Second Chamber of the States-General with the appointment of Envoy of the Transvaal to Portugal, France, and Germany. He was a man of some ability, but with a decided bent for intrigue, and a strong dislike for the Suzerain Power. At this conjuncture he displayed more even than his habitual activity, his journeyings to and from Paris and Berlin being frequent and carefully chronicled in the press. There is good reason to believe that a hurried visit he made to Berlin, very shortly after the Jameson raid, had for its object to persuade the German Government to assume some sort of protectorate over the Transvaal. "The spontaneous chivalrous outburst" of the Emperor William, as it was characterised in the Dutch press, convinced the Boer sympathisers in Holland that a bright future lay before the Republic, inasmuch as it could now

fully reckon on the firm support of Germany. The Boer State, it was held, had ceased to be a *quantité négligeable*, for Germany would, if it were needful, become for it what France had been for the North American Republic in the days of its infancy. Although these illusions were before long to be dispelled by the prudent and statesmanlike attitude of the German Government in the complications that followed, it is interesting to note the hold they at the beginning acquired in Holland, and how readily public opinion there rose to the fly which had been adroitly cast over it. From this period, too, dates the first appearance on the scene of that stormy petrel, Dr. Leyds, whose mischievous activity contributed so largely to turn Continental opinion against us, and who showed himself much the ablest of the clique of Hollanders on whom rests so large a share of responsibility for the subsequent disastrous conflict.

The year 1896 ran its course without any sign of a change in our prospects, another Embassy becoming vacant and being filled up. We paid our annual visit to Luxemburg in July, and went on by Trier and Coblenz to Homburg, where, on our advising Count Seckendorff, of whom we had seen a great deal the summer before at Scheveningen, of our arrival, we were asked to luncheon the next day at Kronberg, where the Empress Frederick was now living in her beautiful Castle of Friedrichshof. The weather being unfortunately very wet, after one of the most terrific thunderstorms I can remember, we were unable to see the lovely gardens on which so much care had been lavished, but the Empress herself showed us many of the treasures she had amassed with so perfect an understanding of art, and which

made Friedrichshof as interesting as it was luxurious and homelike. I have preserved a vivid recollection of this afternoon spent in the society of the most accomplished, and in some respects the most unfortunate of Princesses, whom I never saw again after this day. She had heard a good deal about my misadventures from Count Seckendorff, who had taken a very kind interest in my case, but she made me tell her the whole tiresome story at length, listening with wonderful patience, and evincing, I am bound to add, some indignation, and then, when dismissing us, said very pointedly: "I shall not forget."

We returned to The Hague on the 1st of August, and had barely been there a week when I received a letter from Mr. (now Sir Eric) Barrington letting me know privately that there was a very good chance of the Embassy at Vienna being offered to me when the move consequent on the approaching retirement of Lord Dufferin took place. My appointment was finally dated the 15th October following, and on that day we took our final leave of The Hague, having had our farewell audience of the Queen Regent at the Loo a fortnight before. I left The Hague with very mixed feelings, for, great though was the sense of relief that I had at last, after no little tribulation, reached the topmost rung of the diplomatic ladder, I could not but feel that, at my age, the long desired promotion came almost too late. We had, besides, both taken deep root in Holland and had met there with innumerable kindnesses. It was with heavy hearts, therefore, that we wended our way to the railway station, where, to judge by the crowds of our acquaintance who came to bid us Godspeed, we left behind us not a few well-wishers.

## CHAPTER XVI

### VIENNA, 1896-1897—THE AUSTRIAN COURT

OUR hands were more than full, when we got to London, with the orders we had to give for State carriages, harness and liveries, besides other expensive paraphernalia indispensable at such a post as Vienna. Time, too, was short, as we did not propose spending more than a few weeks in England, hoping to settle down in our new home before the winter fully set in.

A week-end visit we made to my old friend and colleague, Lord Sackville, early in November, deserves a passing mention. It was the first time I saw Knole, where I have since been several times, and the impression it then made upon me is still present to my mind. Knole is, I imagine, almost unique among our old historic homes for the care bestowed on it by successive generations of its Sackville owners, who, in a rare conservative spirit, have not only left its contents untouched and undisturbed, but seem to have applied themselves to keeping the most interesting portions of the immense rambling building exactly as they were when lived in three centuries ago in early Stuart times. To these laudable instincts of its former inmates must now be added the happy circumstance that the splendid place and the treasures that fill it are committed to the care of Mrs. Sackville West, whose exceptional understanding of pictures, ancient furniture, and artistic

*bric à brac* of all kinds, united to perfect taste, is such as to make her the most competent of custodians for the stately possession that first came to the family in Elizabethan days, though a great part of the vast fabric<sup>1</sup> dates back to a much more remote period. So interesting are the contents of Knole, with its innumerable portraits—now for the first time properly catalogued—and its many curious historical memorials, that they afford, to those who have the good fortune and the leisure to study them, a perfect epitome of the annals of England.

The pleasant party staying there with us comprised Lady Bantry (now Lady Trevor), Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hope, my late Secretary at The Hague, des Graz, and, with his popular wife, John Savile Lumley—now Lord Savile and owner of splendid and ghostly Rufford—whom I had first known years before as a mere boy in his uncle's house at Berne.

It is an interesting fact that, among the many valuable things at Knole, there are two complete services of plate marked with the Royal arms, which were brought there by two successive husbands of the charming Duchess of Dorset whose curious fate it was to be twice Ambassadress at Paris, the second time as the wife of the Lord Whitworth so well known in connection with the rupture of the peace of Amiens. In the good old days which ended some time before I entered the ranks of our diplomacy, a full service of plate was always issued by the Crown to Ambassadors and Envoys on their first appointment, which on retirement, they were allowed to retain as their private property. *Nous avons changé tout cela* and many other

<sup>1</sup> Knole was given by Queen Elizabeth to her cousin, Sir Thomas Sackville. The house contains 365 rooms, 52 staircases, and 7 courts, while, it is said, there are no less than seven acres of roofing—including stables, &c.

things besides. By the same token this Duchess of Dorset, whose lovely presentment by Hoppner is one of the chief treasures of the house, was on terms of great intimacy with Queen Marie Antoinette in the early days of the Revolution, and her letters, and, if I am not mistaken, her diary, preserved among the family records, would, if they saw the light, be most interesting reading. But I have lingered too long over beautiful Knole which has a remote family interest for me, inasmuch as Lady Anne Sackville, the eldest daughter of the first Earl of Dorset—Queen Bess's Treasurer—happens to be an ancestress of my mother.<sup>1</sup>

On the 19th of November we received a Royal command to dine and sleep at Windsor, where, shortly before dinner, Sir Edmund Monson and I each had private audiences of the Queen to kiss hands on our respective appointments to Paris and Vienna. Besides the customary Royal remembrances with which she was pleased to charge me for the Emperor Francis Joseph, H.M. gave me particular messages for the widowed Crown Princess Stéphanie, in whom she took a great interest, as she did at all times in her relatives on the Coburg side. As usual on these occasions the party at Windsor was quite a small one. The only Royalties staying there were the Duchess of Coburg—who inquired very kindly after my son George, whom

<sup>1</sup> Lady Anne Sackville married Sir Henry Glemham, of Glemham, Suffolk. Their daughter married Thomas Cressy (of Fulsby, Lincoln), whose daughter and sole heir became the wife of Sir Thomas Parkyns, Bart., of Bunney, Notts.

Sir Thomas Glemham, son of Sir Henry and Lady Anne Glemham, was one of King Charles' trustiest generals. He defended Carlisle with great tenacity, and only surrendered it when on the verge of starvation. "He was the first man," says an old writer, "that taught soldiers to eat cats and dogs." Glemham was afterwards Governor of Oxford. The Glemham family has long been extinct.

she had known well at Malta when he was serving in the *Alexandra*—and Princess Henry of Battenberg. Lady Downe, who was in waiting, was an old friend of ours, as were also Mrs. Bernard Mallet and Miss Minnie Cochrane, and with them the next day we spent a pleasant forenoon going over the beautiful State rooms before returning to London.

I have never had occasion to see Windsor since its complete renovation in the present reign, but in the old days the simple dignity of the etiquette observed there, the quiet dinner-parties of seldom more than twelve or fourteen people, and the informal *cercle* held afterwards in a certain corner of the great corridor whither the Queen was wont to adjourn, and where she sent for and conversed with the dinner guests in turn—not to speak of the admirable arrangements made for one's comfort—all bore a character of old-world repose and refinement that were in perfect keeping with the age of the venerable Sovereign and the life of retirement she had led for so many years. My periodical visits to this most splendid and picturesque of Royal residences count among the noteworthy memories of a long diplomatic career.

A week later, I returned to Windsor on an extremely cold day, to be sworn of the Privy Council. The Council was held in a small sitting-room—which in former days would have been termed a closet—generally used by the Queen when giving private audiences, and which contained a number of interesting miniatures. When the oath had been administered to me, and I had been congratulated by our Lord President, the Duke of Devonshire, who, I may here mention, has through life been the kindest of friends to me; we all stood—the other Privy Councillors and the late Sir Charles Lennox Peel, Clerk to the Council



—in a sort of semicircle round the sofa where the Queen was seated, and I have a strong recollection of the strikingly clear, precise enunciation with which she uttered the word “approved,” after the Lord President had read out to her the title or summary of each of the documents respecting which her pleasure had to be taken.

Before the Council I had had to wait for some time in one of the large State rooms which, on this bitterly cold afternoon, seemed to me very insufficiently warmed—the Queen, as is well known, had a great dislike to hot rooms—and I had been thoroughly chilled. Although already feeling far from well I went that evening to the Royalty Theatre, but on my return home after the performance had a sleepless night, and by the morning was in a high fever. My friend and neighbour the late Dr. Maclagan—the loss of whom his many patients to this day deplore—at once pronounced it a case of influenza complicated by bronchial pneumonia. For some days I was very ill indeed and was kept to my bed for nearly a fortnight. All our plans were upset, and it was only on the 23rd of December that I was able to get as far as Dover, where we stayed over Christmas day at the Lord Warden Hotel. At last, after once more breaking the journey at Brussels, we reached Vienna on the afternoon of the 28th, and were met at the Westbahn terminus in the Mariahilf by the entire staff of the Embassy and taken to the Hotel Bristol on the Kärntnerring.

It is very difficult for me to summarise the feelings I experienced in returning after an interval of many years, and in a very different capacity, to a place I had known and liked so well as I had

Vienna. The dominating note in one's thoughts was, and of course in part remained, a sad one. There was no blinking the fact of the change that had taken place in one's self, while the ancient Imperial city had undergone an almost complete transformation. Of this, however, I had already had an inkling during the hurried visit we had made to Vienna in September on leaving Marienbad; the object of the journey being to assure ourselves of the capabilities of the Embassy House, which, after the departure of the Monsons for Paris, had been entirely overhauled by the Office of Works and was still, when we now came for good, in the hands of the workmen putting in the electric light and a new hot-air apparatus. But even with these great improvements the house could not be considered a really good one for the purpose for which it had been built some thirty years before when my old St. Petersburg chief, Sir Andrew Buchanan, was Ambassador. The estimates for it had been ruthlessly cut down by the Treasury, with the result that the original plans had to be essentially reduced and modified. For entertaining on a large scale it was quite inadequate, and, what was almost a crime in a dance-loving capital like Vienna, it had no ball-room worthy of the name, and very insufficient accommodation for the sitting-down supper which is a feature of all big entertainments there. The ground on which it stood had formed part of the spacious gardens of the Villa Metternich in the Rennweg which I well remember in the days of the old Chancellor. Only a small portion of those gardens now remains attached to the Villa, the bulk of them having been disposed of in building-lots on which, besides our own Embassy, there stands

the splendid house built by the German Government for the use of their Ambassador—which was immediately opposite to, and sadly overshadowed, ours—and beyond it, the charming *petit hôtel* that had been purchased by the Russian Government from the Duke of Nassau. Having, however, recounted the deficiencies of our new official residence, I am bound to add that we succeeded in making it very habitable, and were able in it to do our duty by the Vienna world, and that it has left in my mind none but the pleasantest associations.

I may as well say at once that I was highly fortunate in the composition of my staff during the whole of my tenure of the Embassy at Vienna. In Ralph Milbanke, the First Secretary of the Embassy, who died some two years ago to the sincere regret of all who knew him, I had the best of friends and most useful of collaborators. His knowledge and experience of affairs in the Dual Monarchy, and of the society of Vienna and of Pesth, were quite exceptional, the greater part of his career having been spent there. He enjoyed deserved popularity in the most exclusive Austrian and Hungarian sets, was a welcome guest in the best houses, got the best of shooting, and, while being accounted a Viennese of the Viennese, remained a most efficient and zealous diplomatic servant of the Crown. Our service suffered a real loss by the untimely death of Milbanke. Colonel Wardrop, who was the smartest of cavalry officers and had made a name for himself in the Soudan, was, as far as I could judge, an unusually competent Military Attaché in an Empire whose mounted troops have at all times been renowned for their quality. Wardrop did the Embassy essential service during the crisis of the South African

war, and was not only much liked in the leading military circles at Vienna, but was fortunate in being in great favour with the Emperor Francis Joseph himself. It has always seemed to me unfortunate that the opinion of an officer with such a special knowledge of horseflesh as his should not have been turned to better account by our military authorities at home, in the contracts they made for horses in Hungary for the army in South Africa.

Findlay, one of the nicest fellows in the service, who is now doing excellent work under Lord Cromer in Egypt, was all through my time the very efficient head of our Chancery, which also numbered "Freddy" Clarke, Rennie—the latter still at Vienna—and was later joined by young Lord Granville whom, as his father's son, I was very glad to have on my staff, of which he became one of the most popular members. My eldest son, Horace, too, before long came to me from Teheran as Second Secretary.<sup>1</sup>

I had found on my arrival two promising juniors, who, however, soon left: Mr. J. L. Baird for Cairo, and eventually for Abyssinia, and Mr. Colville Barclay who followed Sir Edmund Monson to Paris. Besides these regular members of the service we had a succession of young Honorary Attachés. Lord Newport, who is at present one of the Prime Minister's Private Secretaries, Lord Langton (now Lord Temple), and Lord Hyde, each in turn served with me for a time. It would, I think, be a good thing if more of our eldest sons went through a course of diplomatic training abroad, and thereby acquired a special knowledge and experience which could not but

<sup>1</sup> He went up in February 1891 for the competitive Diplomatic Examination, passing first of the three successful candidates, thirteen having competed.

be of advantage to them later on as hereditary legislators.

I was still far from restored to health on reaching Vienna, and was not sorry that my audience of the Emperor had to be deferred for a short time on account of H.M.'s absence on a shooting expedition. On the 11th of January, however, I was received with all the ceremony observed at this ancient Court. Three dress carriages were sent to the Embassy to fetch me and my staff, the latter preceding me in the two first, while I followed in the last—a very handsome glass coach—with one of the Emperor's *officiers d'ordonnance*—a young Prince Thurn and Taxis, seated opposite to me. I was afterwards told that the Emperor had selected this smart young officer to fetch me on hearing that I had known his father, Prince Lamoral Taxis, well in bygone days, when he was a brilliant *Vortänzer* at the Vienna balls instead of a K.K. Feldmarschall Lieutenant on the retired list.

The stable department of the Imperial Court, which is presided over by the Master of the Horse, Prince Rudolph Liechtenstein (who is at the same time Premier Grand Maître of the Household), is admirably managed under the direct supervision of the First Equerry, Count Ferdinand Kinsky, a younger brother of Count Charles—now Prince—Kinsky who is so well known in English society. The State carriages, drawn by splendid grey Lipizzaners from the Imperial stud-farm near Trieste, were turned out to perfection, and as we drove down the spacious Ring at noon, the time when it is most crowded, every one saluting as we passed, I could not help remembering the far-away days when I had lived here as a simple Attaché.

As we passed under the archway of the Burgthor, and thence across the wide esplanade, now decorated by the fine equestrian statues of Prince Eugene of Savoy and of the Archduke Charles, into the Hofburg, the guard turned out and presented arms, the drums beating *aux champs*. We got out at the *Botschafterstiege*, and going upstairs, preceded by Court officials, passed through an enfilade of rooms, lined with detachments of the German and Hungarian Body Guards, where I was at once met by the Grand Master of the Ceremonies, Count Kalman Húnyadi, the most picturesque figure at the Austrian Court, who was an old acquaintance of mine and the brother of the beautiful Princess Julie Obrenovitch, now the widow of Prince Charles d'Arenberg.<sup>1</sup> In a further room I was greeted by the Grand Chamberlain, Count Abensperg and Traun, another old acquaintance and former colleague when I was at the Paris Embassy. The First Aide-de-Camp, General Count Paar, then went into the next room and announced my arrival, when, the doors being thrown open, I was ushered into the presence chamber and left alone with the Emperor.

After I had duly made my obeisance and delivered my credentials, the Emperor, whom I had not seen for nearly forty years, addressed me with the utmost graciousness—I might almost say cordiality—and, kindly referring to my former service at the Embassy here, said that he was glad to meet again in me *une très ancienne connaissance*. Those alone who have the privilege of knowing the Emperor can realise the winning charm of his manner, and the alert look and benignant expression that light up and transfigure a face whose somewhat rugged

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. p. 235.

features are all too careworn in repose. It is the expression in fact which, as I have seen related somewhere, made the painter Lenbach throw down his brush in despair one day when the Emperor was sitting to him, and reply, with the freedom of a great artist, when H.M. asked what was the matter, that he was thinking that the kindly face must have become a mask, concealing the real countenance of the most worried, sorely tried man in the whole Empire.

After speaking at length and very warmly of the value he attached to the immemorially friendly relations subsisting between our two countries, the Emperor emphasised their special importance at a time when such serious questions were being treated at Constantinople, and when the necessity was so great for a complete accord on the part of the Powers in dealing with them. My private audience—which, my Austrian friends told me afterwards, had been an unusually long one—now came to an end, and, according to the prescribed etiquette, I had, after backing as far as the door, to give a knock on it as a signal for the admission of my staff, whom I then presented to the Emperor, who addressed a few words to each of them. I was asked to dinner at Court a few days later, when I was even more captivated by the Emperor's manner, and struck by the great decision he showed in referring to Eastern affairs which, at that moment, and for some months afterwards, fully absorbed the attention of the Great Powers. Most gratifying, too, was the interest evinced by the Emperor in our preparations for a final advance on Khartoum, and the admiration he expressed of the manner in which the Dongola campaign had been conducted.

Public opinion throughout the civilised world was then still under the sinister impression of the Armenian massacres, which, beginning in 1895 with the atrocities committed in Armenia proper, had spread westwards, and had culminated in the abominable scenes of bloodshed that took place in August 1896 in the very capital of the Empire. The indignation aroused by these events had been reflected in an unanimity of reprobation not always to be noticed in the Powers interested in the affairs of the Levant, and had led, in December 1896, to an Anglo-Russian understanding as to assuring the execution of the reforms deemed indispensable in the Armenian districts of Turkey. This was one of the attempts to improve the condition of the subject races of that Empire, which, however honestly made at the outset, have been in turn defeated by the jealousy and discord of those races themselves, or by the diverging aims of the Powers—to say nothing of the skill with which the least symptom of disaccord between them has been at once exploited at Yildiz Kiosk. On this occasion, however, a definite step had been taken by the assembling in a conference *ad hoc* of the Ambassadors to the Porte who, when I took up my duties at Vienna, were, as I have said, busy working out a general draft of the beneficial changes in view.

Although the ambassadorial conference was pursuing its labours harmoniously and without friction, there was still discernible at Vienna much of the old distrust of Russian designs in that quarter, and a corresponding anxiety to learn how far it was possible to rely on our Government not departing from its traditional policy in regard to the cardinal points—as they had been heretofore considered—of maintaining the *status quo* at Constantinople and in



the Straits, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Paris. The more immediate fear then entertained in Austrian Government circles was that renewed disturbances in the Turkish capital—whether these were provoked by the Armenian Committees, or other fanatical elements such as the Softas or the Young Turks—might, by imperilling the safety of the European communities, and even of the Embassies, afford to Russia a welcome pretext for a *coup de main* on that capital itself. On the other hand the Sultan was credibly reported to be highly irritated by the pressure put upon him by the Powers. On one occasion he had indeed exclaimed that sooner than be troubled again with these reforms he would call in the Russians and place himself in their hands.

Coupled with these apprehensions was the uncertainty generally expressed, and shared in by eminent authorities like Count Kálnoky and M. de Kállay, as to whether, in such a sudden emergency, the other Powers could be counted upon to uphold the Treaties and put an effectual check on Russia. The general impression at Vienna was decidedly pessimistic; even a statesman so inclined to optimism as Count Goluchowski—Count Kálnoky's successor at the Imperial Foreign Office—sharing in the gloomy view taken of the outlook in the East. It so chanced that, very shortly after my arrival, Count Goluchowski had been to Berlin, where he attended a Chapter of the Order of the Black Eagle, and was treated with marked distinction. He had returned thence to some extent imbued with the theories current there as to a complete change having taken place in our attitude in England towards the Near Eastern problems. He had heard it confidently asserted at Berlin that this change had been partly brought about by the dominant

position we had recently acquired in Egypt having lessened our interest in the question of the control of the Straits, and in a still greater degree by the revulsion in public feeling towards our ancient ally and *protégé* which, more or less dating from the Bulgarian atrocities, had now been revived by the persecution of the Armenians. In short, H.M.'s Government were represented as being compelled by the growing anti-Turkish sentiment essentially to modify their attitude in Eastern affairs. The object in view in propounding this theory was, of course, to sap still further the waning British influence with the Porte, and thereby to prepare the way for the gradual building up of that German preponderance at Yildiz Kiosk of which we are now witnessing the remarkable political and economic fruits.

The scepticism which was at the same time openly and contemptuously professed or affected at Berlin as to Great Britain ever drawing the sword again, except in those petty quarrels to which her overgrown empire necessarily exposes her, had likewise not been without its effect in Vienna, and it was not easy under these circumstances to convince the Imperial Government that the fundamental lines of our policy in Eastern affairs remained unaltered and continued to rest on the Treaty of Paris. To this period of doubt and anxiety must in fact be assigned the new direction taken at Vienna in dealing with those vital Balkanic concerns on which Austria-Hungary, cast out as she has been from Germany and despoiled of Italy, now almost entirely concentrates her attention.

The Imperial Government, in the fear that had been instilled into them of their possible isolation in the event of a sudden acute crisis on the Bosphorus, very naturally bethought themselves of the advantages

of a direct understanding with the Power of whose designs they had been led to entertain somewhat exaggerated apprehensions. It was during the visit paid by the Emperor Francis Joseph to St. Petersburg, at the end of April of this year (1897), that the bases were laid for the general agreement with Russia on Balkanic affairs which still subsists, and has done much to further the cause of peace in Europe. In my opinion great credit is due to Count Goluchowski for his share in effecting this arrangement. It has worked very well on the whole, and, now that Russia is so hampered by the disastrous contest in the Far East, has necessarily led to a legitimate increase of the Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkanic Peninsula. Indeed it may almost be counted as one of the singular effects of that distant contest that henceforth the Dual Monarchy will have seriously to reckon at Constantinople, not so much with the weight of her colossal northern neighbour, as with that of her formidable ally and predominant partner in the Triple. So strangely has the Russo-Japanese war transformed for the time the elements of the nearer Eastern problem. Here, however, I feel that I am travelling somewhat out of the record and must put a check upon myself.

As for my intercourse, both personal and official, with Count Goluchowski, it was of the most agreeable character throughout my four years' residence at Vienna. I ever found him, as did my colleagues, patient, obliging, and eminently conciliatory, while, on occasion, fully capable of holding his own. It would perhaps be out of place on my part to try my hand at a portrait of the statesman who, after upwards of ten years, still enjoys the unabated confidence of his Sovereign, and has become an essential

factor in European politics, but on one marked characteristic I would, however, venture to touch. "A sanguine Sarmatian with the most perfect Parisian gloss," as he was once described, Count Goluchowski is essentially a statesman *homme du monde*, a type that tends more and more to vanish from the Great European Chancelleries. The fine reception-room at the Ball-Platz,<sup>1</sup> in which he works seated at a *bureau* that once was used by Prince Kaunitz, is replete with historical recollections, having been successively tenanted by Metternich, Felix Schwarzenberg, Rechberg, and, last not least, by Kálnoky. It was, moreover, a pleasant resort for the diplomatist who, coming thither to exchange views or to carry out instructions, was grateful when arid political discussions were occasionally relieved by an amusing sally, or by some detail of social life at Vienna or elsewhere which showed how carefully the Minister kept himself informed of all that went on in the world around him. From Paris, where he had served for several years, and had enjoyed much popularity, Count Goluchowski had brought back the most charming of wives in Princess Anna Murat, who did the honours of the Imperial Foreign Office with infinite tact and grace.

In spite of the clouded political horizon, this first winter season we went through in the Kaiserstadt was very animated. There were the two customary Court balls, the *Hofball* and the *Ball bei Hof*, the delicate distinction implying that the first is a great official function, in full uniform, to which every one entitled to go to Court is bidden, while the second is much smaller and more select. The *Hofball* was a splendid

<sup>1</sup> The name by which the Imperial Foreign Office—situated on the Ballhausplatz, so called from an old tennis-court, now pulled down—is known, as we say Downing Street of our Foreign Office.

*fête* and most interesting as a sight, though necessarily ceremonious and fatiguing, especially the long diplomatic *cercle* that preceded it, our *Corps Diplomatique* comprising an unusual number of persons—about one hundred and forty, not counting the ladies—who were nearly all in turn honoured with a word from the Emperor and the Archduchess Marie Josepha (wife of the Archduke Otto), who, in the absence of the Empress, did the honours of the Imperial Court. The immense, profusely-lighted ball-room into which we presently followed the Royalties, offered a brilliant *coup d'œil*. The family jewels of the great Austrian ladies are justly noted for their splendour, and the mass of varied uniforms, and, still more, the national Court dresses of the Hungarian magnates, and of a few Polish nobles, gave a striking touch of colour to the scene. Although smart, the Austrian military uniforms of the present day, however, are not to be compared with those I remember in old times, while no doubt far better adapted to active service. The Emperor went about indefatigably between the dances. Singling out the persons of mark with whom he wished to converse; causing the *debutantes* at Court to be presented to him; and now and again addressing a few words to one or other of us foreign representatives, he practically got through as much business in the course of the evening as one of his Ministers in an ordinary day's work.

There is no regular supper at these large State balls, the dancing coming to an end at midnight after a long *cotillon*, during which the wearied Ambassador, who has been on his legs since half-past seven, finds a corner where he can listen comfortably to the enchanting strains of the perfect band led by Eduard Strauss, almost the last of that gifted dynasty of composers of

dance-music. As for the Ambassadors, they are far better off than their husbands at these Court entertainments. Besides having a privileged bench of their own, they are asked in turn to sit by the presiding Archduchess on the dais occupied by the Imperial family, and afterwards adjourn with her and the other Archduchesses and a few Austrian *Fürstinnen* of the highest rank to a sort of tea-supper. In fact the great distinction with which the wives of Ambassadors are treated at the Imperial Court often reminded me of a saying of the late Countess Apponyi, which I have, I fancy, already quoted elsewhere, that the only really enviable positions in diplomacy are those of an Attaché and of an Ambassadors. Much the pleasantest of the Court entertainments was the *Ball bei Hof* which is strictly confined to the *crème de la crème* of the Vienna world, and, but for the stars and decorations of the men (*Grands Cordons* being, oddly enough, not worn on the occasion) is more like a magnificent private *fête*, only officers appearing at it in uniform. It is not preceded by a *cercle*, the Imperial family coming in—a pretty procession as at our own Court balls—when the guests have assembled. Before the *cotillon* there is an excellent sitting-down supper at which the Ambassadors are placed at the Archduchess Marie Josepha's table and their wives at that of the Emperor.

There were big balls, too, this winter at some of the principal Vienna houses, among others at the splendid Pallavicini Palais on the Josefs-platz which contains a perfect ball-room, and a brilliant *fête* was given by the Prime Minister, Count Badeni, at his official residence in the Wipplingerstrasse, which the Emperor honoured by his presence. This was a rare distinction, and the *fête*—which struck me chiefly at the time

by the almost painfully excessive electric lighting of the great suite of rooms—proved to be in some respects memorable; preceding, as it did by only a few months, the sensational fall of the Premier who stood in such high favour with his Sovereign. Altogether, I think it may fairly be said that the festivities in the houses of the Austrian aristocracy—such as the Liechtenstein, Harrach, and Auersperg Palaces—have a certain *ancien régime* air and stamp of their own which is probably only equalled by the hospitalities of the historical princely families of Rome. So far as I know, this atmosphere is seldom met with elsewhere, however more *recherché*, luxurious, and lavish of display may be the dissipations of the Paris or London gay world.

One of the duties we had to go through on our arrival was to apply for audiences of the several members of the Imperial family residing at Vienna, and these were not few in number. The audiences were generally appointed for the afternoon, and, in the case of Archduchesses, my wife was expected to go to them in full evening dress. But if the etiquette imposed was, to English ideas, somewhat strict and irksome, nothing could be more amiable and pleasing than the reception one met with. The kindly, genial manner, which finds its most perfect expression in the Emperor, is distinctive of the entire Imperial family with scarcely an exception. It is indeed traditional in the House of Habsburg, and in great measure explains the popularity the members of it have always enjoyed even at times of the greatest stress and difficulty. It is in accordance with the simple, cordial bearing, devoid either of distrust or servility, which extends through all classes down to the lowest, and, as the late Lord Lytton used to say, makes Austria the pleasantest of countries

for a gentleman to live in. Even the proud, exclusive aristocracy, so careful to preserve its blue blood in its matrimonial alliances, and intolerant of attempts to force a way into its inner circle, is by no means so haughty and arrogant as it is sometimes represented to be, though it still no doubt keeps very much to itself, and is entirely free from certain traits too noticeable in our own society. The highest classes in Austria and Hungary have a well-bred dislike to anything like affectation or pose, and except on special occasions are averse to display. They lead simple lives in their great homes, care little for the pleasures of the table, and of more recent years show a decided preference for the private *unnumerirter Fiaker* over the family carriages, in which, in the old days I so well remember, they were driven in state up and down the Prater Allee.

But I have strayed away from our audiences of the Imperial family. Perhaps the most interesting figures among them were the three widowed Archduchesses: Elizabeth, mother of the Queen of Spain and of the Archdukes Frederick and Eugene—a wonderfully handsome old lady, full of spirit and intelligence, who had played no uninteresting part in the history of the Imperial family—and the beautiful Marie Thérèse, of the House of Braganza, the Emperor's sister-in-law, who, since the death of her husband, the Archduke Charles Louis, has led a retired life in her palace in the Favoritenstrasse, but, as step-mother of the heir to the throne (the Archduke Francis Ferdinand), who is much attached to her, is a factor not without importance in the future of the Monarchy. I regret to have seen this gracious and fascinating lady only on the occasion of our audience of her, when she kept us for a long while



and captivated us by her bright conversation and the winning charm of her manner. The third figure—historically the most interesting of all—was the Crown Princess Stéphanie, then residing with her dear little daughter (the Archduchess Elizabeth, at that time quite a young girl) in the Hofburg under the wing of the old Emperor who was devoted to his grandchild. A kind, gaiety-loving Princess, with artistic tastes; greatly to be pitied both as a wife and daughter, but one of those on whom, fortunately for themselves, the tragedies and mischances of life seem to leave outwardly but little trace.

In somewhat dingy apartments at the old Palace of the Augarten—since renovated and in part rebuilt—dwelt the Archduke Otto, with his wife, the amiable Archduchess Marie Josepha, on whom mainly devolved the duties of representation at Court. In the equally distant Wieden was the Palace of the most genial perhaps of Imperial couples, the Archduke Rainer and his wife, both well advanced in years. One of the most accomplished of Austrian Princes, the kindly old Archduke takes a deep and active interest in science and art, is President of the Academy of Sciences and of the Geographical Institute, while at the same time doing essential service to the State by the efficiency to which, as its Commander-in-chief, he has brought the Landwehr, or Militia, a most valuable adjunct of the Austrian land forces. The last to be mentioned in this long list of Royal personages is the Emperor's youngest and only surviving brother, the Archduke Louis Victor, much the most *répandu* member of the family, and himself entertaining very pleasantly in his Palace on the Schwarzenberg Platz. The Archduke had always been well affected to the British Embassy, was a great friend of poor Milbanke's, and

told not a few good stories of the late Lady Buchanan of whom the Vienna world had stood in some awe. I had known him as quite a young man in ancient Baden-Baden days, and was cordially greeted by him as an old acquaintance.

It was only later on that we became acquainted with the most touching figure of the much tried Imperial house in the Archduchess Marie Valérie, the Emperor's youngest daughter and his Antigone, who came but seldom to Vienna from her lovely home at the Castle of Wallsee on the Danube. From the mother whose favourite companion she was the Archduchess has inherited the beautiful eyes and sweet low-pitched voice, with a play of countenance full of character and intelligence, which quite transforms somewhat irregular features, while her gentle, winning grace makes one well understand the comfort and peace which the much harassed monarch finds in her society.

Before long we had a State function of our own in the formal *ricevimento* which is held by every Ambassador after his arrival at the Imperial Court, but in our case was retarded until April by the unfinished state of the Embassy House. These functions are entirely taken charge of by the Court, who issue an official notice that on two consecutive evenings the Ambassador will receive from nine till eleven. A piquet of cavalry is posted outside the Embassy door; the staircase is lined with soldiers; minor officials are sent by the Great Chamberlain's Department to announce the visitors; and two dignitaries of the Court—in our case Prince Clary and Aldringen and his wife, *née* Princess Radzivill—are told off to present the company to the Ambassador and the Ambadress respectively. The men of course are in full uniform

as at a Court reception, and all the *sommités* of the Vienna world file past, some of the greatest ladies sitting down for a minute by the Ambassadors before passing on. It need scarcely be explained that the ceremonial observed is based on the fiction that the Ambassador is the direct representative of his Sovereign, and, as such, entitled to quasi-Royal honours. At no Court is that fiction carried so far as at Vienna; foreign representatives of Ambassadorial rank being placed in quite a separate category from the Envoys and Ministers, and taking precedence, even at other Embassies, of Austrians of the highest rank, an arrangement which not a little distressed me at first, and sometimes made difficult the placing of one's guests at great dinner parties. But enough of these official poms and vanities. *Ein Botschafter*, a Viennese would say, *ist ein sehr grosses Thier!*<sup>1</sup> and so indeed he is occasionally!

<sup>1</sup> An Ambassador is a very big animal (or beast).

## CHAPTER XVII

### VIENNA, 1897—AUSTRIAN SOCIETY—EASTERN POLITICS AND TROUBLES

THE taking stock, after an interval of many years, of friends and acquaintances in a society that had been so familiar to me as that of Vienna could not but be a melancholy experience. At first indeed I almost felt as though I belonged to an entirely defunct generation, and was a very Rip van Winkle among my colleagues, this dismal impression being strengthened by the fact that several of those whom I had most looked forward to meeting again had left the scene a relatively short time before. Foremost among these was Prince Richard Metternich, a friend of forty years' standing, with whom as a youth I had hunted in couples at Brighton—at the period when the Chancellor, his father, had taken refuge in England during the revolutionary winter of 1848-49<sup>1</sup>—and of whom I had seen a great deal in after years at the Johannisberg and elsewhere. The name of the capable, warm-hearted, cool-headed Richard is bound up with the story of the Second Empire. He it was who, together with Count Nigra—whom I now met for the first time at Vienna—had escorted the Empress safely out of the Tuileries, on that memorable September day. He died eighteen months before my arrival at Vienna of premature decay, the very shadow, so I was told, of his former self.

Another associate of the same period, Prince Alexander Schönburg-Hartenstein, had been carried off very unexpectedly in the preceding autumn. I first remember him as a playmate in Paris, where his accomplished mother—the sister of the statesman, Felix Schwarzenberg, and daughter of the unfortunate Ambassadors who was burnt to death at the *fête* given in 1810 on the marriage of Marie Louise—had resided for some years in the reign of Louis Philippe. From his daughter, Comtesse Czernin, one of the most charming women in Austrian society, I learned that, just before his sudden end, he had heard of my appointment and much rejoiced over it. A man of much ability and of the highest character, Prince Schönburg was President of the Herrenhaus,<sup>1</sup> or Upper Chamber, of the Reichsrath, and by his death, and that of Prince Richard Metternich, the Moderate Conservative Party in that House was deprived of two enlightened and influential members.

A few months after my arrival I lost in Count Kálnoky another highly valued friend, my first acquaintance with whom dated back to the time when he formed part of Count Rodolphe Apponyi's Embassy in London in the sixties. Count Kálnoky had not very long before retired from the Imperial Foreign Department over which he had presided with great ability, a victim in great measure to one of those periodical waves of political passion in Hungary by which too many Austro-Hungarian statesmen have been swept from office. In tribute to his memory I may mention here a circumstance, showing his friendly remembrance of me, which came to my knowledge from an unimpeachable source when I

<sup>1</sup> Prince Schönburg's third son is now Councillor to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in London.

was still at The Hague. On our Embassy at Vienna becoming vacant a few years before, Count Kálnoky caused it to be privately hinted in Downing Street that he would be very pleased if the choice were to fall upon me to fill the post. In reply he was told that he would find me anything but easy to get on with (*difficile à vivre*). Notwithstanding the somewhat harsh judgment passed upon me, he kindly returned to the charge, and said that he knew me quite well enough to be willing to incur the risk. Nevertheless, another Envoy, who was in every way junior to me, was selected instead of me for promotion.

In spite of the many gaps, I soon felt at home again among the kindly Austrians, and found the Vienna world in most respects but little changed. The few *salons*, however, where, in old days, one could drop in of an evening *in prima sera*, as in Italy, had ceased to exist. The only one of such a character left was that of the Dowager Princess Dietrichstein, mother of the present Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at our Court. On most evenings the fine *Palais* on the Minoritenplatz, overlooking that quiet old-world square and the sombre church whence it takes its name—one of the few characteristic corners still left of fast vanishing *Alt Wien*—was open to a small and very select *coterie* of relatives and intimates. Here were generally to be found the old Princess's two sisters, Princess Hatzfeld and Countess Clam Gallas—the latter of whom to the end preserved much of her great beauty and all her charm—a foreign representative or two, or some members of the Liechtenstein, Hoyos, Khevenhüller, or other well-known families. Half-a-dozen or so in all—but the very pick of Vienna—gathered round a big polished

table which was the central point of the *sanctum* on which a carping outside world had, in token of its inaccessibility and the serenity of its atmosphere, maliciously bestowed the appellation of L'Olympe.

An interesting event which took place at the Dietrichstein Palais, not long after our arrival, was the marriage, solemnised in the private chapel with much state and *éclat*, of the daughter of the house, Comtesse Clotilde Mensdorff, with Count Albert Apponyi. The bridegroom, then already immersed in the politics of his country, has since taken so prominent a part in them that his figure is familiar to those who follow with any attention the intricate, disheartening course of affairs in the Dual Monarchy. I subsequently had opportunities of getting to know Count Apponyi better at Pesth. To a strikingly handsome physique and bearing, this aristocratic leader—I had almost written tribune of the people—unites the rarest command of language and of languages. By common consent the most eloquent speaker in the Hungarian Parliament, he would be able to address with equal fluency and effect a French, an English, or a German audience. Unfortunately the views and aims he now professes may well, I permit myself to think, make this wonderful gift of his an element of danger for the country he worships, let alone for the Monarchy to which it is united by already sadly loosened ties. For, surely, the most recent events in Hungary show only too clearly that the party to which Count Apponyi now lends the prestige of his name and the magic of his eloquence, is—one would fain believe, unconsciously—impelling the Magyar State to the verge of a slope—the *pente savonneuse* of French parlance—down which it can only glide to destruction, carrying with it the great Central European Empire. But I

am touching here on questions which are somewhat beyond the scope of these pages, and, respecting which, any remarks I may have to offer will find a more appropriate place further on.

To go back to my experiences of social Vienna on my return to it after such a lapse of years, I found the old Metternich house at the corner of the Rennweg, only a few doors away from our Embassy, tenanted by Prince Paul—the half-brother of the late Prince—with whom I had renewed the friendliest acquaintance some years before at Marienbad. The Metternich *salon*, presided over by handsome Princess Mélanie and her thoroughly nice, unaffected daughter, was a real resource, especially for those who were musically inclined. Young Princess Pauline, or “Titi”—as she was generally known in a society much addicted to nicknames and diminutives—played the violin charmingly, and with the *tours de force* of Alfred Grünfeldt, a pianist of incomparable brio and agility, and the lovely mezzo-soprano of a very good-looking Baroness Bach—a niece by marriage of the Minister who, in the fifties, ruled the Monarchy with an iron hand—the musical evenings at the Palais Metternich were quite delightful. The house contained, too, some very interesting mementoes of the celebrated Chancellor. Unique among them was the magnificent writing-table—a master-piece of ancient French decorative furniture—which had belonged to Choiseul, the Minister of Louis XV. and the ally of Madame de Pompadour, and had been brought from Paris by the Prince in Napoleonic days. There was a room, too, entirely panelled with the finest old mahogany sawn from a number of huge logs only recently discovered in a loft where they had lain forgotten since they



came, as an offering to the Chancellor, on the signature of a treaty with some petty Transatlantic Republic. The most interesting treasure was a portrait of a daughter of the Prince by Sir Thomas Lawrence to which there attached a pretty story. Lawrence came to Vienna two or three years after the Congress, and, as the most fashionable portrait-painter of the day, was a welcome guest of the renowned statesman whom he had painted before both in London and at Aix la Chapelle. One day he came in some excitement to the Imperial Chancellerie on the Ballplatz where Metternich then resided. He had for some time past, he told the Prince, had it in his head to paint a picture of Hebe, but had sought in vain for a suitable model. That very morning he had met in the streets of the city a beautiful young girl, accompanied by a governess or duenna, and evidently belonging to the highest class, who was the perfect personification of the young goddess as he conceived her. He had followed her until she entered the grounds of a villa in the distant suburb of the Landstrasse beyond the *glacis*.<sup>1</sup> Would it be possible, he inquired of the Chancellor, to trace this exquisite embodiment of his dream? While he spoke, the divinity he was in search of entered her father's room; the result being perhaps the loveliest portrait ever painted by the man to whom the most famous beauties of the age had all sat in turn. Poor Hebe died quite young—almost a child—leaving her sweet features and youthful grace to glow on the canvas in memory of the short day of her triumph.

The most important member of the Metternich

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. p. 258. The Villa Metternich, or rather the park in which it afterwards stood, was at that time entirely outside the town.

family was still Princess Pauline, the widow of the late Prince Richard, of whom I have fully spoken before in the first part of these Recollections.<sup>1</sup> Time had in no way diminished her social activity nor impaired her originality and her brilliant imagination. She had become, in the widest sense, the most popular of *grandes dames* with the Vienna public, as she had been the most conspicuous of Ambassadors in the *salons* of Paris. Most of her time and attention was devoted to the furthering of charitable and artistic undertakings which she had a special knack of combining with great skill and ingenuity; doing an immense deal of good, and at the same time keeping all Vienna alive and amused by the prodigious charity *fêtes*, fancy fairs and flower Corsos, which she took the lead in organising, and on which she lavished the resources of a mind ever fertile in new, though occasionally somewhat bizarre ideas. Assisted by distinguished philanthropists like Count Wilczek and others, or the ever open-handed Rothschilds, together with a *posse* of artists and clever pressmen, she dispensed charity on a great scale and with such extraordinary success that her name cannot but remain enshrined as one of the great benefactresses of the Imperial city. After her husband's death she had built herself a charming *petit hôtel* on the Parisian model exquisitely furnished and decorated, in one of the new streets beyond the Botanical Garden, where, with her unmarried daughter, graceful, gentle Princess Clementine—the image of the calm, kindly Richard—she entertained her friends *en petit comité*, with the inexhaustible fund of humour, the same quaint, not seldom paradoxical, way of looking at things, which from her youth up had always made her the very best of company.

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. pp. 237-239.

One of her most intimate friends, Princess Rosa Croy, *née* Comtesse Sternberg—an aunt of the writer of certain letters on the South African war which caused some stir at the time—was another of the most hospitable and *accueillantes* Vienna hostesses in her pretty house in the Schönbургgasse. I remember a very amusing party she gave in carnival time—a *soirée à têtes*, when all the guests, with the exception of an ancient dignitary or two, appeared either in fancy dress or with their heads and faces so dressed or made up as to defy recognition. The Archduke Louis Victor was thus disguised *en rastaquouère*, while Count Henry Larisch, so well known in the Shires, was admirably got up as Svengali in “Trilby.” The greatest hit of the evening was a little old Bedouin chief, with tanned, brown skin, scrubby moustache, and a dingy white burnous and turban to match, whom nobody was at first able to make out; the illusion being still more complete when, at the end of the party, the man of the desert was seen seated on the stairs, smoking, in default of a *tchibouk*, a big cigar—a reprehensible habit in which too many of the Vienna ladies indulge—while calmly waiting for the carriage of Princess Clary, *née* Radziwill, one of the cleverest and most agreeable women in Vienna.

Quite new to me were the splendid houses built of recent years by Baron Albert and Baron Nathaniel Rothschild in the Wieden, whither they had migrated from the family home in the Renngasse, in the heart of old Vienna, where I had often formerly been the guest of their father Baron Anselm, but which is now entirely given up to the offices of the great banking establishment. Baron Albert’s really beautiful abode in the Heugasse, full, like all the Rothschild houses,

of magnificent objects, had seldom been opened since the death of his wife, Baroness Bettina, one of the Paris branch of the family, and by all accounts a thoroughly charming woman who, during her short married life, had found her way to the hearts of the nicest of the Vienna ladies and was universally popular and greatly regretted. A big dinner, however, given by him in a room the whole of the lovely *boiseries* of which came out of some French eighteenth-century palace, struck me as one of the most perfect entertainments I was ever present at.

The *beau idéal*, too, of luxury and comfort, stored with artistic treasures and standing in lovely grounds, was the house of Nathaniel, or "Natty," Rothschild, who had retired from the firm and devoted himself to art and charity, the latter of which he practised on a most munificent scale. The benefactions both public and, still more, private of the Rothschild clan in the several countries where they stand at the head of the financial world, are known to be enormous; but few people are aware of the vast extent of their unrecorded donations, and the sums expended by "Natty" Rothschild on hospitals and other good works in a centre where of late years there has sprung up so malevolent a spirit towards his co-religionists, show him to be imbued with the very quintessence of charity. Here again, however, I come upon a subject to which I may have to return later on. Nothing could be more enjoyable than the small gatherings in his house in the Theresianumgasse, where — very different from the old days I could call to mind—one met a select few of the most distinguished and intelligent set of the Vienna world, and, after dinner, listened to the strains of a small private string band which was

quite perfect of its kind. It is sad to think that the dispenser of these refined hospitalities is now a martyr to ill-health and is seldom to be seen in his Vienna home.<sup>1</sup>

One of the best shows in this essentially military country is the spring *Parade* of the troops quartered in and about Vienna, held every year by the Emperor in person. It takes place on the vast parade-ground known as the Schmelz quite close to the Palace of Schönbrunn. The first we witnessed of these military pageants was rendered more interesting even than usual by the presence of the German Emperor who was on a short visit to his Imperial neighbour and ally. The twenty thousand men or so who turn out on the occasion are drawn up in long dark lines—gone alas! are the spruce white tunics of old—facing the saluting-base whence the Emperor will presently witness the march past. On this fine April morning no prettier sight could be imagined than this martial display. We had to make an early start from town to get to the ground in good time, the Emperor, who is punctuality itself, being due there before ten o'clock. The interminable road through the streets of Margarethen and Mariahilf was crowded with vehicles of all kinds, but at sight of my Jäger's white plumes<sup>2</sup> way was made for us at once by the police all along the line, and we drew up in the first row of the carriages that faced the immense open space and the troops massed in the distance beyond it some time before the first bars of

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild has died, bequeathing munificent sums for charitable purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Ambassadors at Vienna all have a body-servant, known as the *Jäger* or *Chasseur*, wearing a green uniform with a cocked hat and feathers which insures their cutting through any string of carriages.

Haydn's "*Gott erhalte*" told of the approach of the Emperor from Schönbrunn; H.M. with a small suite joining the Archdukes and the numerous mounted staff who were awaiting him. There then followed an ever-lengthening pause, and people began to look at their watches until, at least half-an-hour after the time appointed for the review, Kaiser Wilhelm, belated by some misunderstanding as to the hour, at last arrived from the Vienna Hofburg.

The splendid many-hued body of horsemen now moved on diagonally across the ground, the Emperor Francis Joseph, with the figure of a man of thirty, and a seat which the youngest and smartest officers in his army might well envy, riding a few yards ahead. On his right was his Imperial guest, not looking to the best advantage in a hussar uniform with a cumbersome white, embroidered *dolman* which, for the fine horseman he is known to be, gave him a bunchy, awkward look in the saddle. There was certainly a marked contrast between the two Sovereigns. The glittering swarm of riders—princes, generals and aides-de-camp by the dozen, with numerous foreign military attachés—among whom my friend Wardrop was conspicuous by the British scarlet and smartness of his turn-out—made a wonderfully bright picture as they cantered leisurely across the field. As soon as the extreme right of the line had been reached, the Emperor was received with a royal salute, the bands struck up, one after another, the national anthem, and a long and minute inspection took place of the forces assembled. When this was completed, the brilliant *cortège* returned to the saluting-point and the march past commenced. The easy elastic tread and excellent dressing of the infantry could not but strike even a civilian, and

contrasted curiously with the peculiar, forced step—a parade drill recently introduced from Berlin—which they fell into when immediately passing the Emperor, and over which some of my old Austrian military friends shook their heads rather disparagingly. This was particularly noticeable when the dapper little *Kaiser-jäger*—the flower of loyal Tyrol—came up, with their free swinging stride, to the sound of the Andreas Hofer march, and then suddenly, as they got within a few yards of the Sovereign, took to the cramped, artificial motion aforesaid. Very fine were the Bosnian battalions wearing the red fez and short Oriental jacket. Perhaps the most striking figure of all, however, was that of the Archduke Otto, heading his own regiment of *Uhlans*, a very paladin in appearance, and the best-looking cavalry officer in the Imperial forces. It was altogether a very fine sight, and much interested me, for I had not seen any large body of Austro-Hungarian troops since the day when the last honours were rendered to the victor of Custoza and Novara. Many years lay between then and now, and with them the mournful memories of Sadowa.

With the exception of the slight untoward incident referred to above, the visit of the German Emperor passed off most satisfactorily. It was significant, and was no doubt intended to be so, as an affirmation on the very eve of the Austrian Emperor's departure for St. Petersburg, of the unimpaired vitality of the alliance between the Dual Monarchy and Germany. Certain Germanophile organs of the Vienna press professed indeed to see more in it, asserting that a renewal of the old *Drei Kaiserbund* was now close at hand, and that the Western Powers would henceforth have to reckon, in all questions that depended

on the European concert and more particularly the unconditional recognition of the integrity of the Turkish Empire, with the superior will of the three closely leagued Imperial Powers. This foreshadowing of a new Holy Alliance devoted to the bolstering up of the Grand Turk was quite a curiosity in its way.

In sober earnest there was ample matter for consultation between the allied Sovereigns at this conjuncture. To the Armenian troubles had succeeded the Cretan and Greek *imbroglios*. The condition of Crete had for months past been a source of anxiety to the Great Powers. Schemes for a reform of the evils by which the island was afflicted had long been debated at Constantinople between the Porte and the Ambassadors, and, under great pressure, the Sultan had been induced to consent to the appointment of a Christian Governor and to a renewal of the old Halepa pact which had formerly afforded certain guarantees to the Christian element of the population. The promises extracted from the Sultan were, however, very imperfectly carried out. A chronic state of warfare continued between the scattered Turkish garrisons and the insurgent bands, the latter receiving arms and reinforcements from Greece through the agency of the Cretan Committee and the powerful secret organisation known as the *Ethnike Hetairia*. The readiest means of pacifying the Island would have been an effective blockade of its coasts, and this measure—to which the Powers were later on obliged to resort—had, to do him justice, been strongly advocated by Count Goluchowski and somewhat contemptuously dismissed by Lord Salisbury.

Before long, however, the imprudent action taken



in February 1897 by the Greek Government in despatching a torpedo flotilla under Prince George and an expeditionary corps commanded by General Vassos, precipitated matters and compelled the Powers to intervene, in the interests of the general peace of the Levant, and indeed of Europe. The course pursued by the Greek Government was an almost exact reproduction of that which I too well remembered their following under the same Premier some ten years before, with this difference that, by the Vassos expedition, they made a futile attempt to create a *fait accompli*. A marked division of opinion soon manifested itself among the Powers as to the mode of dealing with the recalcitrant Hellenes. Should Greece be coerced again as she had been before, under almost parallel circumstances, or should she be left to take the consequences of the hazardous enterprise on which she had embarked? The latter view prevailed in the end. The project of a blockade of the seaboard of the Kingdom, which was urged by the Northern Powers—Germany taking the lead in it—was abandoned in view of our opposition to it, for without England there could be no blockade. On the other hand the Cretan waters were strictly guarded by an international squadron which landed forces for the occupation of Canea, and, on our initiative, the bases of Cretan autonomy were laid down, and, after much discussion, it was finally agreed to send military contingents of each of the Powers to occupy the Island.

The Porte meanwhile had made formidable preparations and assumed a threatening attitude, and mediation was attempted at Athens with the object of preventing the outbreak of war. To the indispensable condition laid down, however, of the recall

of Vassos, the most stubborn resistance was offered by the Greek Government, and it was only in May, after the first crushing disasters of the war, and on the intimation that nothing would be done to prevent a Turkish advance upon Athens, that orders were sent to the ill-starred expeditionary corps to evacuate their untenable positions. On this occasion President Faure is reported to have sent a message to King George to the effect that H.M. ought to find some consolation in the thought that he had acquired "*une hypothèque qui lui assurait l'avenir*"—a prognostication which thus far, and, in my humble opinion, unfortunately, has not been realised.

For me, with my Greek experiences, the long and difficult crisis that preceded the outbreak of this regrettable war naturally had a more direct personal interest than for my colleagues. I was all through it in constant communication with the Greek representative, M. Manos, for whom I acquired a sincere regard, and with my old friend and colleague Mr. Egerton<sup>1</sup> at Athens, respecting the means of warding off a conflict which might bring with it grave consequences for the King and the dynasty. In the end it was mainly due to the anxiety felt equally by all the Powers to shield King George that the short struggle was fought out *en champ clos*, the marshals of the lists calling a truce as soon as the Greek champion seemed to be getting the worst of it. It would, I believe, be difficult to overstate the extent to which solicitude for the King and his family has acted as an *ægis* for Greece at the most critical periods of her recent history.

After the war came lengthy negotiations for the settlement of Crete and the choice of its future

<sup>1</sup> Now the Right Honble. Sir Edwin Egerton, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

governor. It might not be unamusing to give a list of the numerous candidates proposed for the office, and eliminated in succession out of regard for the susceptibilities of one or other of the Powers, before Prince George of Greece received his mandate. Respecting one of them, the late M. Droz, a distinguished Swiss Federal Councillor whom I had known at Berne, but whose experience, as an able administrator in the best ordered of communities, scarcely seemed to fit him for dealing with a turbulent and lawless population emerging from Turkish slavery, I was tempted to commit in one of my despatches a feeble pleasantry—a heinous offence at all times in the eyes of the Foreign Office—by writing that in the land of the legislator Minos, M. Droz' chief qualification would perhaps be the Christian name he bore of Numa.

Of the fellow-Ambassadors with whom I worked during the crisis, I have already paid an affectionate tribute to my friend the late Count Kapnist, whose services to his Government at Vienna can scarcely be over-estimated. I would nevertheless mention here that in the very open talks we often had, he frankly manifested his doubts of the wisdom of the policy of expansion in the Far East upon which Russia was then entering. He has been spared much in not living to witness the fatal consequences which he appeared almost instinctively to have foreseen.

The most interesting personality among my colleagues was Count Nigra, who besides being our *doyen*, could claim to be senior to all the Ambassadors then serving at the great Courts. A favoured disciple of Cavour, he had for nearly half a century taken an active part in all the political transactions that affected the country which, in his time, had grown

from small, sturdy Piedmont into united aspiring Italy. To a diplomatic experience which was unrivalled, he united unusual tact and a rare understanding of those he had to deal with. From St. Petersburg\* and London he had been transferred to Vienna, where he had immensely improved relations ; successfully smoothing down troublesome questions too apt to arise out of the ambitions of the Irredenta party, the divided ownership of the Adriatic, or spheres of influence in the Balkanic peninsula. The Italian Ambassador had now been at Vienna twelve years and equally enjoyed the full confidence of his own Sovereign and of the monarch to whom he was accredited. The most brilliant epoch of his life had of course been when, as still quite a young man, he had been selected by Cavour for the delicate functions of Sardinian Minister to the French Imperial Court. At the Tuileries he had been an especial favourite, and even in his old age he retained great traces of the good looks and gallant bearing that had stood him in such good stead in Paris, and to which a Subalpine accent and way of pronouncing certain letters in French added a piquant trait. In Count Nigra I found a kindly and trusty colleague by whose sage counsel I often benefited. He has now retired from the old Palffy Palais which he rented in the Josephsplatz, to a sunny home overlooking the Pincio, whither I send him a cordial greeting on this page with the expression of the hope that he is engaged on the memoirs he was then preparing, and which will surely be a contribution of surpassing interest to the history of the last century.

At the French Embassy in the stately Lobkowitz Palais I found, on my arrival, M. Lozé, ex-Prefect of

Police, a cordial, capable man, who soon left diplomacy for a seat in the Senate. M. Lozé is somehow associated in my memory with the late King Milan of Servia, with whom he was on very friendly terms, having, when he was responsible for the safety of the French metropolis, done the ex-King a good turn in some difficulty he had got into there. On his frequent *incognito* visits to Vienna, King Milan never failed to call at the French Embassy. I heard a good deal about him and his views and schemes from my colleague, who had a high opinion of his capacity. Milan bitterly regretted his abdication, and fearing for his weakly, inexperienced son, to whom he was much attached, was prepared, had he lived longer, to resume an active part in the affairs of Servia as the power behind the throne. In this design he could have counted on the army with which he was popular, and but for his premature death, the world would probably have been spared the most hideous massacre of modern times, of which, it is satisfactory but sad to think, our King and Government have alone manifested adequate reprobation.

In M. Lozé's successor, the Marquis de Reverseaux, who was a diplomatist of much experience, I had a very pleasant and interesting colleague who soon proved a valuable resource in our small diplomatic set. His staff before long acquired a notable addition in the Military Attaché, Marquis de Laguiche and his wife, a daughter of Prince Auguste d'Arenberg—well known in England as the Chairman of the Suez Canal Company—and niece of Louis d'Arenberg whose brutal murder at St. Petersburg I have recounted elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> A most charming, *spirituelle* woman, she and her husband imported as it were a *fine fleur du Faubourg*

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. ii. pp. 275-278.

*St. Germain* element not often to be met with nowadays in French Embassies. Being also nearly related to several of the great Austrian families, Mme. de Laguiche had quite a special position in Vienna society.

If the Italian Ambassador was the most interesting of my colleagues, my opposite neighbour, Count Philip Eulenburg, was certainly the most important. In him the distinctive representative character of the Ambassador as *alter ego* of his Sovereign was nowise a fiction, for when he had occasion to speak at the Ballplatz on any urgent matter, his voice was that of his Imperial master—through the telephone. I saw a good deal of Count Eulenburg, who at that time stood high in favour at Berlin, and more than once, while sitting talking to him, have known him to be “rung up” from the highest quarters. He has great artistic tastes and aptitudes, and has written a charming cycle of songs entitled “*Rosenlieder*.” He could be a very pleasant companion, and both socially and, I believe, politically, served his Government at a very difficult post, with much tact and ability. Seconded by his wife, an amiable Swedish lady, and their bright, cheery daughters, he made his splendid Embassy house a great centre of hospitality. I am inclined to think, however, that he rather unwisely overdid certain *Bierabende* at which he gathered once a week distinguished artists, literary men, and members of the Reichsrath. These decidedly interesting informal men’s parties afforded the ill-disposed a pretext for saying that the Embassy was a rallying-point for disaffected deputies with Pan-German proclivities. He was nevertheless decorated with the Grand Cross of St. Stephen—a high distinction which he owed, it was said, to the adroitness he showed in effacing the painful impression caused

at Vienna not long before by the revelation of Prince Bismarck's *Rückversicherungs Vertrag* with Russia. Shortly afterwards his own Sovereign raised him to the rank of Prince.

Among my many other colleagues I found in the Bavarian Envoy, Baron de Podewils, a remarkably shrewd and competent observer of the sadly complicated affairs of the Empire, and a most agreeable man to boot. He has since become Prime Minister in his own country, and, judging by the extremely *soignés* little dinners he and his clever, lively wife used to give in a quaint miniature Palais in the Josefstadt, the Diplomatic Corps at München may well be congratulated on his appointment. I should be forgetful were I to omit in this lengthy enumeration mention of the Roumanian Envoy, M. Ghika, and his artistic wife, who liberally contributed to Vienna social life by frequent and interesting concerts and amateur theatricals. My Roumanian colleague had a curious experience when he was a student at Paris, having been enrolled in one of the battalions of the Mables and fought during the great siege against the German invaders. What I could never quite understand was why, during the Boer war, the otherwise friendly Ghikas should suddenly have developed violent Anglophobe sentiments.

While, all through the spring, war and the patching up of peace engrossed the attention of European diplomacy, happy England was wholly engaged in preparations for commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. I was placed in some difficulty in this matter, as compared with many of H.M.'s representatives abroad, by the peculiar character of the, by no means numerous, British community whom I was of course most anxious to associate with the celebration by the

Embassy of so eminently national an event. It was almost entirely made up of governesses and teachers, with a certain number of musical and other students of both sexes, a few electrical engineers, some gasfitters, and a trainer or two. The most praiseworthy loyalty was, however, evinced by even the humblest of them. In approved British fashion, they formed a Jubilee Committee presided over by our distinguished Consul-General, Ritter von Schoeller, an Austrian industrial magnate of the highest standing, and now a member of the Upper Chamber of the Reichsrath. Besides preparing a dutiful address to the Queen, which was inclosed in a handsome casket of the best Vienna workmanship, they raised a fund for the purchase of a new organ (sorely needed) for the Embassy Chapel, and for the placing there of a stained glass window in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee.

There was of course an official thanksgiving service which we all attended in uniform, and the following evening a charity *fête*, in favour of the British relief fund and the Governesses' Home, took place at *Venedig in Wien* in the Prater—the Olympia of the Austrian capital—in the course of which my wife was asked to drive the last bolt into the Great Wheel just erected there by an English Company. On the Jubilee day itself the whole Jubilee Committee dined with us, our party being reinforced by the Dowager Countess Lützow, *née* Seymour, mother of the present Austrian Ambassador in Italy, and—to give a thorough Anglo-Saxon finish to the proceedings—by the United States *Chargé d'Affaires*, Mr. Townsend, and his attractive wife, who is well known in London society.

As for the difficult question of dealing with the community at large, it had been triumphantly solved by an announcement in the Vienna papers that “the



Ambassador and Lady Rumbold" would be "at home in the evening to all members of the British Colony," supplemented by the distribution through the Consulate-General of cards of invitation for all whose names and addresses could be ascertained. Of the many functions with which I have been in any way concerned, this turned out, I think, the most satisfactory and at the same time the most uncommon I can remember. The Embassy House was of course *en grand gala*, brilliantly illuminated both inside and out, with Drescher's excellent band playing in the ball-room. I and my staff and that of the Consulate-General were in full uniform, my wife and our dinner guests being also *en grande toilette*. In curious contrast with these surroundings there began to pour in at nine o'clock a stream of nice, somewhat shy ladies in the simplest of evening attire, not a few in plain morning gowns, with a sprinkling of men mostly in every-day clothes, until the rooms were filled by a crowd of people—containing, to use a slang adjective of the day, one or two decidedly weird figures—few of whom either my wife or I knew even by sight, but whom, as they arrived, we cordially welcomed in true White House fashion. The dining-room was then thrown open and all our guests went in to supper, in the course of which a well-timed telegram, for which I had arranged with a friend at the Foreign Office, was brought to me, and I was able to announce the close of the Queen's triumphant progress through London. Enthusiastic cheers followed the announcement; the Queen's health was drunk and the National Anthem sung by the whole assembled company; and by the time I had shaken hands with, and toasted, Baron "Natty's" veteran trainer, Mr. Butters, I felt that I had done the best I could under the circumstances.

That morning I had received from Lord Salisbury a telegram announcing that the Queen had been pleased to confer upon me the Grand Cross of the Bath, but the most gratifying event of a successful day was the visit of the Emperor, who came, just before luncheon, in the uniform of his regiment (the King's Dragoon Guards), and wearing the ribbon of the Garter, personally to congratulate me on this auspicious occasion. H.I.M. stayed with us for some time, speaking of the Queen, as he always did, with great regard and admiration, and afterwards touching on some of the current topics of the hour. I received so short a notice of the Emperor's gracious intention, that I barely had time to put on my uniform and collect my staff for his reception.

It was no secret that the Emperor had been anxious to attend the Jubilee in person, and it is deeply to be regretted that he was prevented from doing so by the doubts felt by the Queen's advisers as to whether she would be equal to the strain of receiving crowned heads, whose presence would necessarily involve more ceremony and consequent fatigue. There may have been other motives for the decision taken, but it was unofficially made known to all the principal Courts some time before the Jubilee. In Austria it became a question of some importance which of the Princes of the Imperial House should be deputed to represent the Emperor. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand, as the eldest son of the late Archduke Charles Louis, and next in succession to the throne, of course seemed the fittest representative of his august uncle. For some time past, however, the state of H.I.H.'s health had caused considerable anxiety. He had wintered in the south, mostly at

Ajaccio in Corsica, and a notion, which happily soon proved to be unfounded, prevailed that he was almost to be looked upon as a confirmed invalid. During his prolonged absence his younger brother the Archduke Otto had been put forward a good deal on official occasions, and had accompanied the Emperor on his recent journey to St. Petersburg. He had thus come to be so generally regarded as the eventual heir that the return of his elder brother, in greatly improved health, gave rise to much idle speculation as to the outcome of what was assumed to be a rather painful situation. So sincere, however, was the mutual affection of the two brothers, that, as far as they themselves were concerned, no difficulty was to be apprehended. In fact I remember, when dining at the Augarten, being impressed by the manner in which the Archduke Otto referred to the excellent news that reached him about his brother, and his telling me how eagerly he looked forward to his speedy return. Soon after his arrival the Archduke Francis Ferdinand simply resumed the position to which he was entitled, and early in June was selected to represent the Emperor in London.

The choice made of him gave me the opportunity of an audience of H.I. and R.H., who occupied a small Palace in the Reisnerstrasse, whence he afterwards removed to the much more dignified Belvedere. He received me most courteously, and conversed with me for a long time in German, evincing much intelligence as well as a real interest in general affairs, to a study of which he is known to have since applied himself assiduously. The Archduke, although less strikingly handsome than his younger brother, is a very good-looking man, with a somewhat pensive cast of countenance. His greatest passion is sport, and

he is accounted one of the finest shots in a country remarkable for its sportsmen. Leading of late a comparatively retired and happy domestic life, but little is really known about him to the general world, which does not prevent much being said of, or attributed to him. He is, probably correctly, reputed to have decided opinions, and has certainly given proof of a strong will and a tenacious disposition, and, whenever the mournful day comes of a vacancy in the throne, he is certain to grasp the reins of government with no feeble hand.

Among the many things that were some years ago currently reported of H.I. and R.H., it was said that his sentiments towards the Hungarians as a nation were not of the most cordial. This is a delicate point to touch upon, but I think I may without indiscretion relate what I gathered on the subject during my last day at Pesth in May 1900. I had then some highly interesting conversations with the Premier of that day, M. de Széll, a statesman of much judgment and perspicacity who may, it is to be hoped, again do good service to his country and to the Crown. The perennial question of the economic relations between the two halves of the Monarchy had brought about at the time a more than usually acute crisis. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand had just passed through Pesth, on his way to some shooting on the Lower Danube, and had had a long interview with M. de Széll, who of his own accord told me that he had been greatly impressed by the quickness and intelligence of the Archduke and by his charm of manner. The very friendly tone in which the Premier spoke of the Archduke quite excluded the idea of his looking upon him as ill-disposed towards his future Hungarian subjects.

Still, I must again repeat, the heir to the throne is relatively so little known that it would be as presumptuous to express any judgment of him, as it is to attempt to forecast the future in which he is destined to play so important a part. Whenever, therefore, questions are put to me, as they frequently are, about the Archduke, I can only say that he is as yet almost an unknown quantity. And indeed he must be so by force of circumstance. Having at the age of twenty-six so unexpectedly become heir-apparent by the tragical end of his brilliant and accomplished cousin, he was in very small degree prepared for the high destiny that awaits him, and for which he has since been sedulously fitting himself. He has, therefore, as it were, to feel his way, and above all to maintain a strict reserve. So profound, too, is the deference for the Emperor felt by all the members of his House, that it is hardly conceivable that the Prince who stands nearest to the throne should allow his personal views and opinions to pass beyond the threshold of his private circle. The Archduke, therefore, and, like him, the future of a much distracted Monarchy, may be best described in German parlance as "*ein grosses Fragezeichen*" (a big sign of interrogation).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### VIENNA, 1898—PARLIAMENTARY TROUBLES— BUDAPEST—THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH

OF our representatives abroad none can have a more splendid or more varied playground than the fortunate occupant for the time being of H.M. Embassy at Vienna. Without leaving his post he may roam at leisure over some of the fairest regions of Central Europe, from the broad plains and sombre forests of Bohemia in the north, to Styrian and Tyrolese mountains, or far down south to Istria and the blue waters of the Adriatic. Eastwards there comes within his purview the whole of the great semi-oriental Magyar realm; or, pushing northward again, the bleak, marshy Galician plateau where, under the easy Habsburg sway, some seven million Poles breathe freely and contentedly, leaving it to their less fortunate brethren across the border to indulge in sad and hopeless dreams of national resurrection. And where-soever he may direct his steps across the big, motley, polyglot Empire, he is sure to find friendly, hospitable races, which, whatever their mutual antagonism and the diversity of their origin, have all in common a trait of simple unaffected kindness that can only be accurately expressed by the untranslatable word *Gemüthlichkeit*. Unfortunately for him the Ambassador is usually too much tied down to his work thoroughly to explore the manifold beauties of his diplomatic domain, and such was certainly the case

with me during my brief tenure of the Embassy House in the Metternichgasse.

I was seldom able to leave Vienna before August, by which time it had, more even than most capitals, become a city of the dead ; even the small *bourgeoisie* and shop-keeping class taking refuge from the heat and dust in the countless villa residences and cottages nestling close at hand on the nearer slopes of the lovely Wienerwald, or in pleasant villages like Hietzing, Dornbach, or New-Waldegg, with cheerful *Gartenwirthschaften* where some Lanner or Strauss of the future led a spirited band. The environs of the great city are indeed gay and charming, though to reach them otherwise than by suburban trains one has to drive through long, ugly, straggling *faubourgs*, over rough pavement intersected by tram-lines, a sore trial to one's horses' feet and to the rubber tyres of one's carriage. Nowhere better than from the heights of the Kahlenberg does one realise the beauties of Vienna's surroundings. The great town lies stretched out before one, backed by the forest-clad range of the Wienerwald and the distant Styrian Alps beyond it, the majestic spire of St. Stephen's soaring high above the countless roofs. But for the wide girdle of suburbs round the now dismantled inner city, and the many factories that deface its outskirts, the prospect is much the same as that on which Sobieski and his fellow-commanders gazed before their victorious assault on the besieging Turkish host, when, writing to his "Marysienka," the hen-pecked Polish hero announced that he had that evening supped in the tent of Kara Mustapha. My colleague Nigra generally took up his summer quarters on this much-frequented hill, and one day I was taken by the Nestor of diplomatists to visit, in a secluded spot

among some neglected shrubberies, the grave of the celebrated Field Marshal Prince de Ligne who, dying in 1814, at the age of eighty, while the Congress of Vienna was at its height, had expressed the wish to be buried in full view of the city he had loved so well. I remember my aunts mentioning him to me as one of the celebrities they had known at that most historical of diplomatic gatherings—not an ordinary link with the past, considering that the old Marshal was born upwards of a century and three-quarters before the year in which these lines are penned.

When at last we took our holiday, we began it at Marienbad, whither we had for some years past gone regularly from The Hague. Of the various health resorts I am acquainted with it is the one I decidedly prefer. English people flock to it now, and, by yearly becoming more and more the fashion, it is fast losing its pristine character. When I first saw the place—in 1892 I think—its ways were still quite simple and unconventional. In the crowds that went patiently past the Kreuzbrunnen in single file, and afterwards tramped virtuously up and down the promenade, I scarcely recollect half-a-dozen persons of British nationality. That first year the Dowager Lady Radnor, with Mrs. Scott-Gatty, Lord and Lady Romney, the Francis Newdegates, and dear old Sir “Billy” Russell and his wife, were among the few English of any note that I can call to mind. That same year, too, it was that I renewed my acquaintance of upwards of forty years’ standing with Prince Paul Metternich. The Metternich seat of Königswart, with its shady grounds and gardens—in which an obelisk commemorating a visit made by the Emperor Francis to his Chancellor is a conspicuous



feature—and its adjoining inclosed *Thiergarten*, or deer park, now thrown open and partly turned into building lots, has always been the most hospitable of resorts for visitors to Marienbad.

At the popular Bohemian watering-place I again came across the young Duc d'Orléans, whom I had not seen since he was staying at Government House in Bombay in 1888, on his way to undergo a military apprenticeship under our colours with a battalion of the Rifle Brigade. This was of course long before certain unfortunately indiscreet manifestations which H.R.H. has no doubt since sincerely regretted. The Prince can be, it is said, a *grand charmeur*, and has certainly about him a knot of devoted adherents who form part of what is best in French society. For several years he was a regular *habitué* of Marienbad, where he took tremendously long walks over the hills, and thought nothing of a tramp of thirty odd miles to Carlsbad between breakfast and dinner. A still more indefatigable walker, by-the-by, was breezy Sir John Fisher—now our eminent First Sea Lord at the Admiralty—whose acquaintance I first made at Marienbad. The presence of the exiled *chef de la maison de France* no doubt contributed to attract a good many French people, and amongst them Comtesse Mélanie Pourtalès and Mrs. Standish, *née* des Cars, than whom French society never produced two more charming ladies. Of this French *coterie* not the least interesting figure was General de Galliffet, the finest cavalry leader of Imperial France and the hero of the desperate charge at Sedan. He was to be seen here year after year, wearing the roughest country clothes; the broadest-brimmed of *sombreros* shading the keen face with the fiery eyes and eagle nose; a large cape thrown carelessly

over the shoulder of his spare gaunt figure, giving him the air of one of the grand old fighters of the days of the Ligue. The General is withal a most original *causeur*, of a caustic wit, and, among his countrymen, England has no better friend than the Marquis de Galliffet.

We went on from Marienbad for a so-called *Nachkur* to the baths of Gastein, to which, in spite of the wild beauty of the scenery, I took a positive dislike. The constant roar of the great waterfall above Straubinger's Hotel, where we had unfortunately pitched our quarters in almost sunless rooms, was, I thought, most trying; and the narrowness of the valley, too, gives the whole place a gloomy, confined aspect. I was glad to get away, after a short stay of a fortnight, to beautiful Salzburg and the comforts of the admirably managed Hotel de l'Europe. At Gastein we had found a small set of very pleasant English people, in Lady Lathom and one of her daughters, Lord Northbrook and his son, Lord Baring, and my old friend Lord James of Hereford and his niece. Of this agreeable *coterie* two have now gone: Lady Lathom being killed that same autumn in a most distressing carriage accident, and Lord Northbrook dying only the other day.

The Eastern troubles which had caused so much anxiety at Vienna and elsewhere having now subsided, it was not unreasonable to look forward to a quiet autumn in the domain of public affairs. From this period dates, nevertheless, the parliamentary breakdown in Austria, which has had such disastrous consequences for the entire Monarchy. Its ultimate, unavoidable, reaction on the relations between Cis-Leithania and Hungary, clearly bringing out the

defects and dangers of the dual system which, the other day, was so truly and eloquently stigmatised as "a vulture gnawing at the very vitals of Empire."

Although it would be impossible to set forth with due brevity the genesis of the troubles by which the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is beset, some recapitulation seems indispensable. A general election had taken place in Austria, in the spring, under a new electoral law which had been successfully piloted through the last Legislature by Count Casimir Badeni, whose able administration of his native province of Galicia had acquired for him the Emperor's confidence. The Polish Premier was pledged to carry through the Reichsrath the so-called *Ausgleich*, or economic portion of the fundamental compact of 1867 with Hungary, which, under an ill-advised stipulation of that arrangement, has to be renewed, and if necessary revised, every ten years, the most vital interests of both countries being thereby periodically subjected to a perilous strain. For carrying through the *Ausgleich* Count Badeni had counted on the return to the Chamber of elements, partly Conservative and partly Clerical, similar to those which predominated in the former House, and had through six years ensured the regular working of the parliamentary machine. The general election brought about instead a complete change in the composition of the Chamber. The Germans returned to it no longer formed a fairly compact body of moderate views, but were broken up into groups with separate, more or less advanced, *programmes*. The character of the Czech parliamentary contingent was likewise essentially modified by the preponderance in it of the Young Czech party with its extreme national

pretensions. Indeed the chances of the Government being able to rely on a sufficiently large majority in the all-important matter of the *Ausgleich* seemed so doubtful, that the Premier tendered his resignation, the Emperor, however, declining to dispense with his services.

In the autumn that preceded the general election the Premier, foreseeing the difficulties he would have to contend with, had made a bold stroke to secure the support of the discontented Czechs by the promulgation of the *Sprachenverordnungen* of disastrous memory. By these ordinances the knowledge of Czech as well as of German was required of all Government functionaries in Bohemia and Moravia, and both languages were placed on a footing of equality in all judicial and administrative transactions in those provinces. The elections had taken place in the midst of the agitation produced among the Bohemian and other Germans by a measure they deeply resented. When the Chamber met in April they at once resorted to obstructive tactics, and brought in a motion for the impeachment of the Ministers, on the ground that they had infringed the Constitution by issuing the Language Ordinances without first obtaining the sanction of Parliament. Disorderly scenes ensued, and the session was abruptly closed in June by Imperial decree.

In November the Reichsrath was called together again, Count Badeni having all through the summer and autumn endeavoured by private negotiation to bring about some understanding between the contending Czechs and Germans. The events that followed are but too well known. Proceedings of an unprecedentedly violent character disgraced the Lower House of the Austrian Legislature, the lead

in them being taken by a handful of Pan-German deputies headed by the notorious Schoenerer and Wolf. These deplorable episodes, which, for a time, made the Austrian Chamber a by-word among Parliaments, have been graphically described by the quaintest of American humourists, Mr. Clemens,<sup>1</sup> who was then on a prolonged visit to Vienna. I was myself present at the memorable sitting when the Falkenhayn motion, having for its object to strengthen the hands of the President in checking members guilty of disorderly conduct, was brought in,<sup>2</sup> and I shall never forget the extraordinary and scandalous sight presented by the Chamber. The resolution was at once passed by the majority of the House, who rose *en masse* and held up their hands in sign of approval ; the enraged deputies of the Extreme Left meanwhile hurling the grossest invectives and insults at the President to a deafening accompaniment of penny trumpets, tramway whistles, and hammering of desks, followed the next day by the storming of the Presidential platform and a free fight between Germans and Slavs. The Chamber in fact had worked itself into a frenzy bordering on lunacy.

The passions let loose soon spread to the street, and for a few days Vienna was on the verge of a popular rising. Matters looked so serious that the Emperor, who, with characteristic loyalty, had stood by his Minister to the last, finally consented to part

<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain : "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg ; and other Stories and Sketches,"

<sup>2</sup> Under the existing standing orders the President had no disciplinary powers whatever. The Falkenhayn Law, although irregularly introduced and forced through without debate, simply enabled the Chair to exclude for three days disorderly members who had been twice called to order ; the exclusion to be extended, if necessary, to thirty days by the Chamber, at the instance of the President.

with him. Much the most ominous and discreditable feature of the movement, both in and outside Parliament, was its thoroughly disloyal, Pan-German, character; and it may truly be said that the fall of Count Badeni—who honestly, though maladroitly, aimed at restoring concord between the Bohemian Germans and Czechs—took place to the treasonable strains of the *Wacht am Rhein* and the *Bismarcks Lied*. Nevertheless, the personal popularity of the Emperor is happily so great that, almost immediately after this period of stress and storm, I remember his being more than usually well received when he attended—at the beautiful Votivkirche built in memory of his escape from assassination in 1853—the funeral of the Austrian naval hero Admiral Sterneck.

This lengthy account of the origin of the difficulties under which Austria proper has been labouring ever since, could scarcely be avoided because of their direct bearing on the much more important relations with Hungary. Prince Bismarck is credited with having said in 1866, in the excusable elation of a signal triumph, that thenceforth the centre of gravity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire must move more and more towards Pesth. The crisis I have related above gave a great impetus to the evolution predicted by the Iron Chancellor. The grave embarrassment caused to Austria by internal dissensions, and by her complete—though temporary—parliamentary breakdown, unavoidably became Hungary's opportunity. At any rate Hungary had to be reckoned with more and more at Vienna. With the keen political instinct that distinguishes the race, the Magyars at the same time sedulously courted their Sovereign, and whenever he visited his Hungarian

dominions gave him a warmer welcome than he was accustomed to from the less demonstrative Viennese. The more ambitious Hungarian aspirations none the less grew apace, although, under the prudent guidance of statesmen like Bánffy and Széll, they were restrained within due bounds. At one period in fact the wise counsels that obtained in the Government at Pesth much contributed to assist the Austrian Executive in their parliamentary difficulties, and, when I left Vienna for good in the autumn of 1900, the legitimate influence acquired by Hungary was such as to make her not only the predominant partner in the Union, but, as far as could be judged, its sheet anchor. The regrettable turn since taken in Hungarian affairs is outside the limits of these pages, but, in considering the dangers it portends to the great Monarchy which is the central arch of the European fabric, it is only just to bear in mind that they have grown up in great measure out of the evil days first brought upon Austria by a group of demagogues whose deliberate, unconcealed aim it has all along been to procure her disruption, and through it the accomplishment of the Pan-German designs. Well might that distinguished leader of the Czechs in Parliament, M. Kramartz, exclaim at that period: "*Avant tout il faut sauver l'Autriche!*"

The eventful year 1897 had closed under the painful impression of the parliamentary tornado, but with the new year the light-hearted Viennese began to look forward to the celebration of the Jubilee of the Emperor's accession, for which extensive preparations were being made throughout the Imperial dominions. As regards Vienna society, the fact of

several young Archduchesses and a Princess of Cumberland having just "come out" gave a special impetus to the gaieties of the season. The Duke of Cumberland, whose eldest daughter, Princess Marie Louise, was one of the *débutantes*, has, since the death of the King his father, made Austria his permanent home. In the winter he spends a few months at his villa at Penzing, just outside Schönbrunn, and the rest of the year is passed on his estate at Gmunden overlooking the beautiful Traunsee. H.R.H. is a special friend of the Emperor, and he and his family are universally beloved in Austrian society. No dispossessed Prince could show more simple dignity in the difficult position in which he is placed, or at the same time make a better use of the large income saved out of the Hanoverian wreck. In that respect—like the other chief sufferer by the events of 1866, the Duke of Nassau (now Grand Duke of Luxemburg)—the heir of the last King of Hanover offers a bright example to all dethroned Royalties. "*Es sind so edle Menschen!*" said to me one of the most intelligent women in Vienna society who was a great intimate of the Cumberlands. Of the kindly, gracious Duchess who, in figure and carriage, bears so strong a likeness to her sister, our Queen, it would be difficult to speak too highly, and indeed we received so much kindness from all the members of this most charming family that we cannot but hold them in very grateful remembrance.

In honour of the Cumberlands we gave our first big dinner party, followed by a small ball which I remember chiefly for the number of Royalties—no less than eleven in all—for whom we had to arrange places at supper with the very deficient accommoda-



tion I have already referred to. Of dancing Royalties there came, besides the Cumberland Princess, the Archduke Frederick's lively little daughter, Archduchess Christine, and the two half-sisters of the heir to throne, the eldest of whom, the Archduchess Marie Annunziata, is abbess of the Convent of noble ladies of the Hradschin at Prague—a position of great dignity always reserved for some Princess of the Imperial House—which did not prevent the present charming holder of it from dancing with all the spirit of a true Viennese. There was no lack of animation throughout this winter, and among our visitors was Lady Adelaide Taylour who came on her way from Fürstenstein to enjoy some of the gaieties of the Vienna Fasching.<sup>1</sup> The Archduke Frederick gave a really splendid ball in the Palace he inherited from his uncle the Archduke Albert, the victor of Custoza, whose equestrian statue, inaugurated while I was at Vienna, is finely placed in front of the building which stands high on the Augustiner Bastei, a remnant of the old fortified *enceinte* of the city. Besides its priceless collection of drawings by Raphael, Dürer, Rembrandt, &c., known as the “Albertina,” the Palace is full of fine eighteenth century furniture,<sup>2</sup> curios and works of art which have descended to its present owner from that eminent collector and *conoscente* Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen. Many of these beautiful things, as well as some interesting mementoes of his other warrior ancestor, the victor of Aspern, were shown me by the Archduke Frederick himself,

<sup>1</sup> Carnival.

<sup>2</sup> Much of this valuable property had been treated as rubbish by an earlier generation and relegated to the garrets, when the Archduchess Isabella discovered it and restored it to use.

who took me through the rooms and did *cicerone* in the most amiable way.

An interesting function of the Vienna winter season is the great ball given by the Municipality in the magnificent *Rathhaus*, or Town Hall, which the Emperor always honours with his presence, most of the Diplomatic Corps being likewise present at it. This year we were among the guests, and, after a few greetings in the reception room, a procession was formed to the ball-room, the Emperor giving his arm to the senior Ambassadors, on this occasion Countess Eulenburg, while the Duke of Cumberland took in my wife, the other Princes and distinguished personages pairing off with the remaining ladies. The chief civic dignitaries and their wives were already assembled on a big estrade erected against the side wall of the fine, lofty Gothic Hall, and thither the Imperial party proceeded. Conspicuous on this estrade, with his handsome wife, was Prince Alois Liechtenstein, formerly so closely connected with Holland House by his first marriage, and now a prominent leader of the Anti-Semite party, of which the Burgomaster, Doctor Lueger, is the mischievously active head. It was on such occasions as these that one was able to realise how closely the Emperor keeps in touch with every class of his subjects. He patiently went the round of the wives of the substantial burghers of the Town Council, was seldom at a loss for their names, and inquired after the condition and prospects of their several trades and industries with a frank, cheery *bonhomie* that could not but gratify and win them. It was a perfect object lesson in the easy paternal attitude towards all ranks of their people which has always been characteristic of

Austrian Sovereigns, and, under the old *régime*, did so much to temper and render tolerable the rigours of absolute rule. By eleven o'clock the whole Court party had retired, possibly to the relief of the recently installed Burgomaster, whose election the Emperor had five times before refused to confirm.

Towards the end of February all the *Chefs de Mission* received a private intimation that the Emperor was going to Budapest for the end of the Carnival, and would be glad of their presence during his stay there. We engaged rooms at the Hotel Hungaria, and went down, in a train crammed full of colleagues, the evening before the State Ball given at the Palace of Ofen—a brilliant *fête* to which the picturesque and becoming gala national costumes of the Hungarian magnates, and the remarkable beauty of many of their wives and daughters, gave an extraordinary *éclat*. It was a dazzling spectacle, the only drawback to it being, to my mind, the monotonous and ungraceful *czárdas* that was danced constantly during the evening, and the wild, semi-oriental music of which becomes very wearisome to the foreign ear. This last week of Carnival was a perfect whirl of dissipation. Count Aladar Andrassy, a younger brother of the celebrated statesman, and uncle of the deputy who is so much to the fore in the present acute crisis in Hungary, gave a big dinner party and reception, and there was a dinner at Count "Pista" Károlyi's—a sumptuous entertainment in a very beautiful house—followed by a ball at the Karátsonyis' in honour of the Emperor. At this *fête* I remember that gallant old blade General Főjervary, Hungarian Minister of National Defence, showing the younger generation how the *czárdas* ought really

to be danced—a wild spirited performance, not unlike a Highland reel, and very different from the tame *czárdas des salons*.

This was the first time I saw Budapest, which its grand position, astride of the mighty river that flows between the twin cities, certainly seems to have marked out as a seat of empire. Seen from the heights of Ofen, the expanse of the city of quite recent growth, its long-stretching, much betrammed *boulevards*, and the boundless plains beyond, appear typical of the ambitions of a generous, imaginative race. What I cannot quite forgive the Magyars is that, in jealously safe-guarding their nationality, they turn to such extreme account a language which, with the exception of the Finnish and Basque still lingering in remote European corners, is the only tongue having no affinity with any of the forms of speech that are current on our Continent. For instance, the notices posted up exclusively in Hungarian in railway trains and stations, much to the inconvenience of foreign travellers, seem an almost childish way of asserting independent national existence. Their unique language is, of course, a formidable obstacle to the assimilation by the nine millions or so of pure Magyars of the about equal number of their fellow-citizens of Roumanian, German, or Slav descent, but they relentlessly use a stern compulsion in the matter.<sup>1</sup> Their aim, it would almost seem, is to turn the realm of St. Stephen into a strict preserve or a sort of island in the centre of Europe. As this would not be girt by any sheltering sea, while

<sup>1</sup> As an instance of the extent to which the Hungarian idiom is fostered, and German discountenanced, it may be mentioned that the distinguished editor of the *Pester Lloyd*, Doctor Falk, complained of the increasing difficulty of finding sufficient German scholars for his editorial staff.

it is actually surrounded on all sides by the rising Slav and Teutonic floods, the bold, and to some extent romantic, conception appears scarcely reconcilable with the dictates of a sound, far-sighted policy.

On the whole we were so delighted with what we had seen of Pesth, and with the civility and kindness shown us, that we returned there in May for the races, when the Hungarian *beau monde* come to town for a few weeks. At this time of year, before the fierce heat of summer has invaded it, the Danube city looks its very best and brightest. We saw a good deal of Count and Countess Tassilo Féstetics (the only sister of the late Duke of Hamilton), who, during the short Pesth season, live and entertain most hospitably—very much *à l'Anglaise*—in their fine house in the town. We also made great friends with the family of Count Louis Apponyi—*Maréchal de la Cour* in Hungary—and went in July to stay with them at Nágy Apponyi, their old family place in the Comitatus of Neutra. Here, in a pretty broken country among the first spurs of the Carpathians, and not far from the ruins of the ancient stronghold from which he takes his name, the Count owns a large deer forest containing, among other game, a herd of that rare animal the *mouflon*, or wild sheep, which in Europe is only indigenous in Sardinia and Corsica. We led quiet, idyllic lives, in most comfortable quarters, in the Apponyi family circle—composed of two pretty daughters and some promising sons—taking long drives or fishing for trout in the cool of the evening, and spending the morning in a large library which contains a remarkable collection of autographs and old family papers. Among the latter was the entire correspondence of a Count Rodolphe Apponyi, whom, by the way, I remember seeing at my Aunt Delmar's house in my boyhood.

These letters were addressed to his mother from the Austrian Embassy in Paris, and gave a vivid account, day by day, of the French Court and society before and after the Revolution that drove Charles Dix from the throne in July 1830. Countess Apponyi herself kindly devoted some time to showing me these papers, which have a real historical value and fully deserve to be published.

Another delightful visit was that we had shortly before made to Count and Countess Roman Potócki at Langut in Galicia, halfway between Cracow and Lemberg. After our ten hours' journey from Vienna we were met at the station by our host, and taken in the smartest of country carriages to the *château*, an ancient square fabric of imposing size and dignity, partly surrounded by the original, now dry, grass-grown moat, and by double lines of splendid trees. Langut, which is one of the most historical domains in Poland, came to its present owners from the Lubomirskis. It is full of memories of a celebrated Princess Lubomirska, an eccentric and very diminutive lady, known as *la petite Maréchale*, who wielded great influence in Polish society at the end of the eighteenth century, and whose rooms are still religiously kept exactly as she lived in them. The contents of this vast, rambling house and the traditions connected with it are remarkably interesting, being so closely bound up with the whole history of Poland. Its long vaulted passages, low ceilings, and walls of almost mediæval thickness, would give it a sombre aspect, were it not for the touch of modern luxury and comfort added to it by its present owners. Besides the numerous state and family living rooms, it contains a chapel, a theatre, and no less than thirteen complete apartments for visitors, each composed of a sitting-room and two bedrooms, with

separate dressing-room and bath-rooms attached. The *train de maison* at Lançut is indeed on a princely scale. The lofty stables with over sixty horses—some of them hunters well known with the Quorn and the Cottesmore—are worthy of a great English establishment; and the dairy with an equal number of prize Dutch cows is just as luxurious. Yet, in spite of its modern refinement, the whole place has a distinctly feudal air that takes one back to the splendid, semi-barbaric lives of those great Polish nobles whose social and political extravagance did so much to bring to the ground perhaps the most interesting and picturesque of ancient monarchies. The spirit of feudalism still lingers in Galicia, and as one drove over his big domain with Count Roman—a typical *grand seigneur* of his country—it was interesting to see the lord of the soil greeted with lowly, almost oriental, salutations which he acknowledged with a gracious wave of the hand.

As is the case with many old residences abroad, the roofs of the small town of Lançut cluster almost in the shadow of the castle, so that, in close proximity with its luxury and grandeur, could be seen all the squalor and litter of Polish Jewry of the most debased order—hook-nosed, be-ringleted men in greasy gabardines, with their slovenly womankind, making up a large proportion of the population—while about the rough market place and its taverns there lounged the well-set-up dragoons of a crack regiment quartered just outside the town. The Russian frontier lies at no great distance, and half the cavalry of the Imperial army is quartered along it. I paid several visits to Lançut. Its *châtelaine*, a daughter of the late Prince Anton Radziwill—an intimate friend of the old Emperor William—is the daintiest and smartest of Vienna

ladies, with all the indescribable Polish charm, and a sunny French grace and brightness which come to her from her Castellane mother.

Meanwhile the festivities in honour of the impending Jubilee had begun to run their course, though it was reported—with some truth, I believe—that the Emperor personally shrank from them, and admitted to his intimates that he wished the year were well over. He, nevertheless, opened in state the Jubilee Exhibition in the Prater, which, of world-fairs of its kind, was a very attractive one. Of the many public demonstrations of loyalty to the Sovereign none was so characteristic and interesting as the gathering known as the *Waidmanns Huldigung*,<sup>1</sup> which took place at Schönbrunn, on a glorious day in June, under the auspices of all the larger landowners of the monarchy, who brought up to Vienna for the occasion their entire staffs of foresters and gamekeepers. The men—some 5000 in number—were drawn up in military array in the great central parterre of the Palace gardens, which, with the colonnade of the Gloriette on the hill in the background and the high stiff hedges on either side, made a perfect open-air theatre. The *seigneurs* all stood in front of their several contingents: Prince Adolf Schwarzenberg, for instance, whose estates are said to cover one-fifth of Bohemia, being at the head of several hundred men. Both they and their people wore the sober, becoming Austrian shooting clothes of grey and green. They came from every part of the Empire; some particularly stalwart, wild-looking fellows hailing from Transylvania and the Bukovina. When they were duly marshalled, the Emperor, accompanied by the Archdukes, all in the same plain sporting attire, came down into the gardens,

<sup>1</sup> The sportsmen's homage.



and passed through the lines with a kindly word or a friendly nod, this pick of the sturdy manhood of the Empire giving a most enthusiastic welcome to the best sportsman of them all. It was really a heart-stirring scene.

In connection with the *Schützenfest* that followed this demonstration, there took place the next day round the Ringstrasse a fine costumed procession, such as the gifted Viennese painter Makart had years before taught his countrymen to organise. One of the cars, beautifully draped in the national colours of black and gold, and drawn by black horses, carried a strikingly handsome woman representing Austria, and was extremely effective. The summer heat, however, soon put an end to these *fêtes* and rejoicings. As for ourselves, after a few days passed with the friendly Kapnists in the lovely valley of Gutenstein, where they rented a *château* belonging to the head of the Hoyos family, we found ourselves early in August in our old quarters at Klinger's Hotel, Marienbad. Not counting old *habitués* like Lady Radnor and Lord and Lady Romney and the Campbell-Bannermans, more English than usual came this year, among them the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle, Lord and Lady Brougham, the Walter Campbells, Sir Arthur Ellis, Sir Charles Euan Smith, and of parliamentary and other notabilities Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. John Dillon, and Mr. Beerbohm Tree.

We left Marienbad at the end of August, choosing a very circuitous route for our return home, and were well repaid for doing so. Stopping on the way at Munich and Innsbruck, we travelled by rail as far as Toblach, and thence drove through the wonderful Dolomite country to Cortina d'Ampezzo, and on through Titian's birthplace, Pieve di Cadore, over the

Italian border to Belluno, ending our holiday with a few perfect days at Venice, where we again met Lady Radnor and Mrs. Hulse. By the 6th of September we were back at Vienna, which we found still half empty and scarcely awakened from its summer siesta.

On the afternoon of the 10th I had just returned from a drive with my wife in the deserted Prater, and was in the Chancery looking for some papers, when Freddy Clarke unexpectedly came in, with consternation writ large on his countenance, to tell me of a report he had just heard that the Empress Elizabeth had been murdered at Geneva. I telephoned at once to the Ballplatz, and receiving from Count Goluchowski a confirmation of the dreadful report, which it seemed impossible at first to credit, immediately cyphered it to the Queen and to Lord Salisbury. I later on learned that a telegram from Countess Sztáray (the Empress's lady-in-waiting) had reached Count Paar, the Emperor's most trusted intimate and head of his military household, at four o'clock; Count Paar had at once driven out to Schönbrunn to break the terrible news to his Imperial master, who had only the day before returned from the autumn manœuvres near Tómesvar in Southern Hungary. The Emperor, while quite overwhelmed, had shown the greatest fortitude, bitterly observing, however, that he was spared no misfortune (*mir bleibt nichts erspart auf dieser Welt*).

Although the Empress had for reasons of health resided but little in Austria of late years—leading a restless life of travel, and having in fact never recovered the shock caused by the tragical end of her son—the impression produced by the atrocious crime to which she had fallen a victim was almost indescrib-

able. She was now only thought of as the most bounteous and charitable of beings, and certainly as the loveliest that had ever graced the Imperial throne. It was remembered, too, how great a support and solace she had formerly been to her husband in the many dark hours of his reign. That she, who had never in any way sought to influence public affairs, and had simply devoted herself to good works and to the encouragement of literature and art, should have been struck down by the dagger of a brutal political fanatic was felt to be the cruellest of fates.

Meanwhile arrangements had to be made for bringing back the remains, and Countess Harrach, by birth a Princess Thurn and Taxis, who had been Mistress of the Robes to the Empress, left for Geneva with the rest of the Imperial household. Late on the evening of the 15th the funeral train reached the Westbahn station in Mariahilf, and we went—taking with us the Duchess of Leeds and her sister, Lady Robert Cecil, who were staying at Vienna—to see the *cortège* pass from a house in the Babenberger-strasse which was on the line of route. The street lamps all along the road from the station to the Burg had been turned into flaming torches so that it was as light as day. Mounted men from the Imperial stables, bearing lanterns, opened the march, followed by cavalry. Then came the *Grande Maitresse* and the ladies-in-waiting in great mourning coaches with six horses, the *Grand Maître* and other officers of the Empress's household coming after them; and then the simple open hearse with black plumes at the corners and a plain black pall. More guards and cavalry, and the procession—beyond words impressive—passed on across the Ring and into the Burg, where, at the foot of the great stairs, the stricken Emperor was waiting to receive it.

My wife, who was on terms of much friendship with Countess Harrach, went to see her the next evening. She found her still dreadfully upset by her painful journey, but heard from her very full details of the tragedy as described by Countess Sztáray, who had been its sole witness. The Empress had shortly before taken up her residence at Caux, a favourite resort of hers, on the heights above Territet at the eastern end of the Lake of Geneva. Early on the morning preceding the fatal day she had gone to Geneva with a small suite, and, after visiting Baroness Adolphe de Rothschild—an old friend of H.M. and an intimate of her sister the Queen of Naples, at her beautiful villa at Pregny—had stayed for the night at the Hotel Beau Rivage. The following day she had sent her chamberlain and other attendants back to Territet by rail, arranging to return there by steamer in the afternoon with her lady-in-waiting. Shortly before one o'clock H.M. left the Hotel on foot to embark, when, within a few yards of the landing-stage on the Quai du Mont Blanc, a man, coming from the opposite direction, ran up against her with such violence, striking her at the same time in the chest, that she lost her balance and fell backwards at full length, touching the ground with her head, which was only saved from injury by the splendid coils of her hair. With the help of Countess Sztáray, she quickly rose to her feet, and walked on to the steamer with her usual elastic step, arranging her disturbed coiffure as she went, though she seemed rather dazed, and said in German to her companion: “*Was is denn geschehen?*” (What has happened?). Soon after getting on board, however, she fainted, and, on her dress being opened, a slight blood-stain was perceived. The steamer being meanwhile well under way, Countess Sztáray, now

thoroughly alarmed, begged the captain to put back, which he at first refused to do until told who his passenger was. A litter was then made, and the Empress, still unconscious, was carried back to the Hotel, expiring quite painlessly at the moment, so Countess Sztáray thought, when she was laid on the bed in her room. The weapon—a shoemaker's awl with murderously sharpened point—having perforated the heart, the victim had succumbed to internal hæmorrhage. It is difficult to imagine a more painful position than that of the unfortunate lady-in-waiting, left quite alone with her dead mistress until the rest of the suite joined her in the evening, and having meanwhile to telegraph to Vienna, interview officials, and take upon herself all the indispensable arrangements. When she reached the Burg late at night, the Emperor was of course most impatient to hear her account of the tragedy, but, seeing how weary and exhausted she was, told her to come to him the next day, when he showed such kindness and patience while she told her terrible story that the poor girl, who had greatly dreaded the interview, came away from it quite comforted and relieved.<sup>1</sup>

At the funeral, which took place on the afternoon of the 17th, the Queen was specially represented by Prince Christian—who stayed with us at the Embassy with Lord Denbigh and Major Evan Martin—and the Prince of Wales by General Sir Arthur Ellis. The Capuchin Church, where the obsequies were solemnised, is very small, and no places being assigned in it to Ambassadors not actually representing their

<sup>1</sup> On the day after the funeral the Emperor instituted the Order of Elizabeth in memory of the Empress. The first Grand Cross of the Order, which was intended for women of all ranks who had devoted themselves to religious or humanitarian objects, was bestowed on Countess Sztáray.

Sovereigns, we watched the splendid pageant of the procession from the French Embassy on the Lobkowitz Platz. When the great *cortège* had passed into the church by the main portal on the *Neue Markt*, we saw the Emperor drive up to a side entrance in the narrow Gluckgasse, with the Emperor William, who had arrived from Berlin only two hours before. Next to the pathetic figure of the bereaved Sovereign, what seemed most to have attracted the attention of those who were present at the funeral service was the rigid attitude of the German Emperor and the special honours that were paid to him. He was placed quite by himself in front of the other Sovereigns present, such as the Kings of Saxony and Roumania, and stood without stirring a muscle all through the long function. The political exigencies of the moment no doubt amply justified the marked distinction with which a powerful ally was treated; but to those few who were still imbued with the old Austrian traditions there could not fail to be something saddening in the sight of the illustrious head of the great Monarchy in his hour of trial, side by side with the grandson of him who dealt that Monarchy so deadly a blow, and this amidst an immense concourse of Princes of German Houses whom hereditary veneration for the descendant of Holy Roman Emperors had moved to gather round him in traditional fealty, by the grave of his Consort.

I never saw the Empress Elizabeth during my second stay at Vienna. She came there for a short time in the spring of 1898—her last visit. I applied of course in the usual form for audiences for myself and my wife, and, knowing how unwilling H.M. was as a rule to grant them, went to see the *Premier Grand Maître*, Prince R. Liechtenstein, privately about it. Both he and the head of the Empress's

household, Count Bellegarde, were of opinion that, in view of H.M.'s well known English proclivities, she would no doubt make an exception in our favour and receive us. A few days later, to my great disappointment, there came an official reply to my application stating that the Empress's health and her impending departure prevented H.M., to her regret, from seeing us, but that she looked forward to doing so on a future occasion. "It is perhaps as well on the whole that you did not see her again," said one of her intimates to me afterwards, remembering that some forty years before I had beheld her in all her youth and loveliness. And indeed, it is well that she should remain only a memory for those to whom she had thus appeared—a perfect dream of Imperial beauty—bearing now, after her sad, strange, wayward life, a perfecting crown of martyrdom. The Emperor caused portraits of her to be painted by the best Vienna and Pesth artists, Horowitz, Lászlo, Benzúr and others, for the several ladies who had been her most devoted friends and attendants. He took a deep interest in the production of these pictures, visiting the artists in their studios, and himself guiding them in that almost impossible task of making live again on the canvas the features of those whom we have loved and lost.

## CHAPTER XIX

### VIENNA, 1899—OLD FRIENDS—COUNTRY VISITS— THE BOER WAR

IN December of this winter of deep mourning the Jubilee so eagerly looked forward to, and for which so many preparations had been made, came and passed away almost unnoticed, except for official thanksgiving services and a general illumination of the capital. It was the fiftieth anniversary of that day at Olmütz when Franz Josef, then only a stripling of eighteen, had been so suddenly and unexpectedly called upon to relieve his lack-brained uncle of the burden of a tottering Empire. The now aged Sovereign's gloomy forebodings about his Jubilee year had only been too cruelly realised, and the 2nd of December found him in the strictest retirement and wholly engaged in the daily patient State drudgery which, as one of his intimates expressed it, had, throughout his long reign, made him the hardest-working *Beamte* (official) in his dominions.<sup>1</sup>

In the domain of public affairs a lull in the strife between Czechs and Germans had followed upon the fall of the Badeni Cabinet. The obnoxious Language Ordinances had remained practically a dead letter. The unmanageable Reichsrath had been

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor is the earliest of risers, being at work both winter and summer long before 5 A.M. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that, when possible, he retires very early to rest.



prorogued for several months, and government was being carried on by means of an Article of the Constitution which in certain circumstances reserved power to the Crown temporarily to levy taxes and provide for the more pressing administrative needs of the country by Imperial decree. Without this valuable Article XIV.—so much inveighed against as a disguised instrument of despotism—the Government machinery in Austria must have entirely collapsed at several critical moments during this period. Even we, with what we—I assume rightly—consider our absolutely perfect institutions, are not unconscious of the benefits of those intervals when the wheels of administration run none the less smoothly for the few months' silence pervading St. Stephen's.

A couple of ephemeral Ministries had succeeded that of Count Badeni,<sup>1</sup> and had been replaced in March 1898 by the Cabinet presided over by Count Francis Thun, one of the principal landowners in Bohemia, and for some years Governor of that province which he had administered with much success. Besides being a man of high courage and undoubted ability, and the best possible type of an Austrian territorial magnate, Count Thun was thoroughly versed in all the intricacies of the racial conflict in the Bohemian Crown-lands. A set of remarkable, and extremely minute, ethnographical charts drawn up by his direction, and which clearly revealed an almost hopeless dovetailing of the rival races only to be surpassed in Macedonia, went some way to show that the Bohemian Premier would probably have been more capable of solving the problem of an equitable adjustment of the respective

<sup>1</sup> Baron Gautsch von Frankenthurm, who presided over one of these Administrations, is now again Prime Minister of Austria.

national claims than any other Austrian Minister. In this respect his resignation, after holding office barely eighteen months, was greatly to be regretted, though the circumstances attending his retirement were highly creditable to him as a patriotic Austrian statesman. That retirement was in great measure due to his manly, though ineffectual, protest against the wholesale expulsion of Austrian agricultural labourers from Silesia and other Prussian provinces, under conditions resembling the arbitrary evictions of Danish subjects from Schleswig. The Premier was in fact a victim of the exigencies of the German alliance.

I was on very cordial terms with Count Thun and have preserved a sincere regard for him. While I was at Vienna he had the misfortune to lose his wife — a Princess Schwarzenberg — from a chronic malady with which she had been afflicted for some time, and which, at the end, made fatally rapid progress. He had been talking over her condition with an eminent specialist who was watching the case, and had received from him the assurance that, as long as the Countess's eyesight was not affected, there was no cause for immediate alarm. He went home somewhat comforted and relieved, and found his wife whiling away the time with a game of patience. "I am fairly well," she said cheerfully, on his inquiring how she felt, "but it is odd that my eyes seem blurred this afternoon and I can't quite make out the cards." She died a few days afterwards, showing to the end the greatest courage and fortitude.

The rigid Court mourning had brought about, among other results, the complete suspension of build-

ing operations at the Imperial Burg, the splendid left wing to which was being completed in anticipation of the great Court festivities planned in honour of the Jubilee. But elsewhere throughout the city the Municipality were almost recklessly engaged in changing the face of things. The works for vaulting over the Wien—a shabby little stream, something like what the Fleet or the Tyburn may have been—and the building all along its course through the town of the suburban line, afforded employment to hundreds of navvies, many of them Italians who, just then, had a bad time of it, so bitter was the feeling aroused against them as compatriots of the assassin Luccheni. A gang of them, it was said, were actually driven from their work one morning by a mob of infuriated market-women. These gigantic undertakings sadly disfigured for the time the outer circle of the Ring and made Vienna—always the windiest of places—insupportable from the clouds of dust they caused; the civic authorities—chiefly bent on Jew-baiting—making little or no attempt to sweep or water the streets. In this respect the Lueger *régime* outvied even our own London County Council.

In the *Innere Stadt*, too, the house-wreckers plied their trade with such vigour that the landmarks which had been most familiar to me of old were fast disappearing as the streets were widened and their picturesque character ruthlessly destroyed. In my wanderings through the town I one day tried to find a house I well remembered—where, up ever so many steps, on the topmost floor, on a level with the fourteenth-century roof of Maria Stieg'n—had lived Mathilde Wildauer,<sup>1</sup> a star of the *Kärnthner Thor* Opera, with the sweetest voice and a laugh

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. p. 288.

that was irresistible. Poor Mathilde had long been at rest in the *Central Friedhof* in the best of company—for there lie Schubert, and Mozart, and the mighty Beethoven. When I reached the well-known corner of the queer old street—with the still queerer name of *Stoss im Himmel*<sup>1</sup>—which led to the house I was in search of, I found it barred; the demolishers had just begun their work on the building and were making room for another of the immense *Zinspaläste* with ornate frontages which are a questionable glory of modern Vienna.

The theatres of my day had long since been pulled down. The old *Kärnthner Thor* was replaced by the splendid Opera House on the Ring, while the somewhat dingy, but cosy little *Burgtheater*, which could boast of the most perfect *ensemble* I have ever seen on any stage—and where Maria Theresa, leaning out of her box, herself announced to the audience, in genuine Viennese fashion, the birth of one of her grandsons<sup>2</sup>—had vanished to make way for the fine entrance in the Michaeler Platz to the Imperial Palace. Its sumptuous successor, facing the Rathhaus, is if anything of too vast proportions, and scarcely lends itself to the delicate shading of light comedy or even of drama, though the acting there is still of a high order. Baumeister, as the ironmaster in *Das Erbe*—really a very fine study of Bismarck—and Fraülein Hohenfels, in such different parts as Georg in *Götz von Berlichingen*, or Puck in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, were both admirable in their way. As for the orchestra led by Richter at the Opera House, nothing finer is to be heard anywhere, and, without speaking of Wagner

<sup>1</sup> Literally: "A knock in Heaven."

<sup>2</sup> "*Der Poldi* (Leopold) *hat a Bub gekriegt*." This eldest son of Leopold II. afterwards became Francis II., the last of the Holy Roman Emperors.

cycles, the careful performance of works like *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Das Heimchen am Herde*, or Tchaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin*, was above all praise.

And talking of music reminds me that Vienna lost, during my stay there, two composers, each, in his own style, among the greatest of his time : Brahms, who died in 1897, after leading for years the life of a recluse, and the *Walzerkönig*, Johann Strauss, who followed him in June 1899. I had heard him a few months before at his brother Eduard's benefit concert, when he played in public for the last time. The old man stepped up to the conductor's desk very stiffly and with some difficulty, amidst a storm of applause. But once there, he led a new waltz of his own composition with all the inimitable fire and *entrain* of his youth. With Strauss it almost seemed as if her light, joyous spirit of old had deserted Vienna. He was buried with great popular honours, the Ringstrasse being blocked by the crowds that followed him to the grave.

In my sentimental searches after the old landmarks, I soon ascertained that the house overlooking the Löwel Bastei, on the third floor of which I myself had lived, had become the residence of Prince and Princess Montenuovo, who kindly asked me to come and have a look at my old quarters. I found them occupied by their only son, who was profitably engaged in his studies with his *abbé* tutor in the rooms where, in the *attaché* days I have spoken of elsewhere, I had idled away many a careless, pleasant hour. My hostess—one of the late Prince Kinsky's four fair daughters, than whom Vienna society contains no prettier or more amiable quartette—showed me some interesting family relics, coming from the Empress Marie Louise, of the captive of St. Helena and of his son — that most mournful of figures in the great

Napoleonic epic—whose faint, shadowy *silhouette* has been revived for the world with some degree of poetic licence by the gifted author of *L'Aiglon*. I remember both M. Sardou and his “golden-voiced” interpreter coming to Vienna and being accorded special facilities for studying on the spot at Schönbrunn the *mise en scène* of that fine but highly imaginative drama.

Another of my ancient haunts I revisited with much interest was the Palais Clary, in the Herrngasse, which of old had been the home of the British Legation<sup>1</sup> for a good many years. Princess Clary kindly took us all over the house, built, with many complicated staircases and passages, round two long narrow courtyards. I had first known it in the sunshine of young, *insouciant* days, but although it contains some fine rooms and has the dignified air common to old Austrian family homes, it cannot even on the showing of its owners—who now, I believe, live almost entirely at Venice—be accounted a cheerful habitation. The Princess told me a curious story about it of which I recollect the general outline. She and her husband had been away from Vienna for some time and the house had been shut up. Before returning she had sent her housekeeper—a thoroughly trustworthy, intelligent person, who had been long in her service—to prepare for her arrival. The woman affirmed that, happening casually to look out across the courtyard, she had distinctly seen, in the broad daylight, a group of persons, in strange old-fashioned clothes, seated round a table near a window exactly facing her at the further end of the yard. Knowing the house to be entirely uninhabited, she at once hurried round along the passages to see who these people could possibly

<sup>1</sup> The Legation was subsequently raised to the rank of an Embassy on the appointment of Lord Bloomfield in 1860.

be. When she reached the door, and, unlocking it, entered the room, she found it quite empty and no sign whatever of occupation. It could scarcely be denied, said the Princess, that odd figures had been occasionally seen flitting about the old building without its being possible to account satisfactorily for their presence.

There is still less doubt that, during its tenancy by our Legation, the Palais Clary more completely established its character for uncanniness. The wife and daughter of one of my predecessors at Vienna went through the following strange experience. One bright, sunny morning they were sitting in a long narrow drawing-room, or gallery, which they habitually used. Miss —— was reading a French book to her mother, when the latter, surprised at seeing—as she supposed—her husband's *chasseur* standing waiting at the end of the room, said to her—"Go and tell Fritz (the *chasseur*) to go down to your father who is sure to want him." Miss —— went towards the man, but when she got near he was no longer there, and she returned to her mother, when they again saw him, and she was once more sent with the message. This happened three times, with the same result; both mother and daughter distinctly seeing the figure *en profile*, dressed in the unmistakable dark green uniform, with his cocked hat and feathers on (Fritz would of course never have worn this indoors), the silver of his epaulettes and sword-belt glistening in the strong light from the window. On inquiry they found that Fritz had not been near the gallery, where he would indeed have had no business unless sent with a message, and they were later on told by the then Prince Clary that, many years before, a *chasseur* serving in his family had been murdered in that very room, which he was still reputed to haunt.

I should perhaps emphasise the fact that these ladies, whom I knew intimately, were assuredly not unduly imaginative or impressionable, and at first were not in the least frightened, but only surprised at seeing the man. It is certain, too, that subsequent occupants of the house seriously complained of the annoyance caused them by the same strange apparition.

A pleasing and almost distinctive trait of Austrians of the uppermost class is their faithful remembrance of old friends and acquaintances. It was very gratifying, for instance, to be warmly welcomed by ladies whom I had first met in their *Comtessen*<sup>1</sup> stage. Of those I had known best and had danced with most in those light-hearted days, were Countess Mariette Hoyos, now the widow of Count Denesch Szechényi, and Princess Ludwiga Lobkowitz, who had likewise lost her husband, a Count Stadion. I have already spoken of these ladies elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Time had dealt tenderly with them. Countess Mariette no longer hummed Strauss's waltzes as she danced, but still sang charmingly and did a good deal of music with my wife, while my dear little friend, the dainty Dresden shepherdess, was as trim and bright as ever, and plied a fairy needle on the most lovely ecclesiastical embroideries. I am tempted here to relate a very trifling circumstance in connection with her which illustrates in some degree the simple, artless Vienna ways. During one of the last *cotillons* I danced with her just before leaving Vienna for China, I made a sort of bet with fair-haired little Princess Ludwiga that I would send her some slight souvenir

<sup>1</sup> The so to speak generic name by which the unmarried young ladies are known in Vienna society.

<sup>2</sup> "Recollections of a Diplomatist," vol. i. p. 270.



from the, at that time, almost fabulous Flowery Land. Accordingly one of the first things I did on reaching Hong Kong was to get a small lacquer-ware fan, which I sent through the Foreign Office to my Vienna partner. I confess that I had entirely forgotten the circumstance until I was now rallied about it by a personage of very high rank who happened to be one of Countess Stadion's great friends. When next I found her busy at her embroidery frame, she triumphantly produced the trumpery bit of Chinoiserie, and explained with some contrition that when it first reached her she had not been allowed by her Liechtenstein mamma to write and thank me for it!

An old acquaintance of quite a different order, who greeted me most cordially, was Benjamin von Kállay, whom I had first met at Belgrade in 1870 at the outset of his distinguished career, and now found Imperial Finance Minister. M. de Kállay rendered great service to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. His profound knowledge of the Balkanic races and of their history and aspirations, was strikingly exemplified in his administration of Bosnia and the Herzegovina which was a model of enlightened statecraft. More valuable still was his influence as a link between the too often conflicting halves of the monarchy, for, although an essentially patriotic Hungarian, he was imbued with Imperial convictions, and strongly opposed to any loosening of the Austro-Hungarian ties, which would certainly be fatal to the prestige and *Machtstellung* of the Empire as a Great Power.

Next to his Imperial master, England had no better friend on the Continent than Kállay. In the many interesting conversations I had with him at different times, I was greatly impressed by his faith

in the beneficent authority of England in international affairs, though that faith was sometimes, he admitted, put to a severe trial by what he believed to be signs of a deterioration in the old combative spirit of the nation. He lived, nevertheless, to witness and rejoice over our South African effort. The advance of Russia in the Far East was watched by him with the deepest interest, and I clearly remember a talk I had with him on the subject seven years ago. Ever since the first great raid of Yermak Timofejeff and his Cossacks into Siberia, he said, the Russian *Drang nach Osten*, though at first little noticed, had been continuous. The stream of emigration to America showed that all European races moved westwards. The Russians alone were attracted by the East. He believed their advance to be practically irresistible, little foreseeing the rude check which Russian ambition was to meet with, and the overthrow of the great Asiatic dominion the vision of which seemed to dazzle him while filling him with apprehension. In M. de Kállay the Dual Monarchy lost perhaps its ablest and most valuable servant.

Late in April I left Vienna for a fortnight to join my wife who was looking after our Eton boy in England, and went round by Nice, where I stayed a few days with my sister—my last visit to her as it happened. The Queen was at Cimiez, which she was never to see again. I received a command for dinner, and was surprised, I remember, to find the aged Sovereign in such good spirits and so full of vitality. But the shadow of the dreary war had not yet darkened her remaining days. She was still able to go for long drives all over the beautiful neighbourhood, where,

my old friend Sir James Harris<sup>1</sup> told me, she had acquired extraordinary popularity by the kindness she showed to all the country people and the interest she took in their concerns. The Queen, during her almost annual visits to France, certainly did a good deal towards preparing the way for the admirable work which has since been achieved by her son and successor. I was back at Vienna in time for the celebration of her eightieth birthday, when the Emperor again came to the Embassy with his personal congratulations. There existed a strong bond of sympathy between the two illustrious Sovereigns who had both known such severe domestic affliction.

This summer—a remarkably fine one—we made a few pleasant and interesting visits to friends in Hungary and elsewhere, besides again going to the Potóckis in Galicia. Keszthély, on Lake Balaton, where we stayed with Count and Countess Tassilo Féstetics, is a very fine possession in every way, where the whole establishment is on a princely and most luxurious scale, and included among other things a *chef* whose superior it would be difficult to find in the Imperial dominions. From the junction at Balaton St. György the Count's private train brought us nearly to the gates of the *château*, an immense pile with a *façade* which, by its length, almost recalls Versailles. In fact, from our apartment in one of the wings it took us three minutes, watch in hand, to reach the drawing-room on the same floor at the other end of the house. In lovely weather we were taken some distance to see the stud-farm and brood mares and the racing stable of

<sup>1</sup> For many years H.M. Consul at Nice, where he died in November 1904.

our host, whose colours are often to the fore at Pesth as well as on the Freudenau at Vienna. This, and sailing in his yacht on the great lake, drives to the rich vineyards that line its shores, and through the immense woods beyond, filled up the days, while an excellent *Zigeuner* band played after dinner, cleverly accompanied by one of the Féstetics young ladies—then quite a child—on that curious national instrument called the *cymbalon*. It was quite a family party, including Count Paul Féstetics and his very agreeable wife, *née* Pálffy. My two sons, Horace and Willie, the latter on leave from his battery at Halifax, N.S., were with us, and, with the charming little daughters of the house, made up the cheeriest of parties.

Another hospitable Hungarian home we stayed at was that of Count Béla Szechenyi at Zinkendorf, or Nagy Czenk—to give it its Hungarian name—a delightful old house surrounded by very fine trees and beautifully kept gardens and grounds. A noble grass avenue of lime trees, some two miles long, leads to a monument erected in memory of Count Béla's wife, *née* Comtesse Erdödy, a sister of the Countess Károlyi who was for many years Ambassador in London. The two sisters were both so beautiful that when they made their *début* in society they were known as the *Götterkinder*. Count Béla's attractive sprightly daughter, Countess Hanna, since married to her Károlyi cousin, did the honours of her father's house admirably, and, besides being a perfect and most entertaining hostess, was an excellent whip. She took special charge of me and drove me about the pretty broken country round Oedenburg and the Neusiedlersee, a shallow salt lake which is being drained out of existence. We

were taken to Esterháza, the now almost deserted *Stammchloss* of the great family of that name—an immense, empty palace with memories of Haydn, who was Kapellmeister to the Prince Esterházy of the day, and wrote most of his compositions there. Among the many stately and finely decorated rooms, we were shown those where poor Princess Sarah dwelt, in almost solitary grandeur, during the short spell of her married life; society, in those benighted days, deeming the quarterings of this daughter of Lord Jersey and his proud, imperious wife, not sufficiently impeccable, and giving her the cold shoulder in consequence.

On the very borders of Austria and Hungary, near Bruck an der Leitha, stands the fine old castle and domain of Prugg, belonging to Count Harrach, whose wife had been Mistress of the Robes to the Empress. The Leitha, which flows through the park, marks the division between Austria and Magyarland. The house is a very ancient one, originally built on to a genuine Roman tower, and has an old-world air in curious contrast with its beautiful but more modern gardens and glass-houses. When we went there, the neighbourhood was full of military, and our hosts had only a few days before been honoured with a visit from the Emperor, who had come from Vienna on his annual inspection of the troops at the camp of exercise at Bruck. Our next visit was to the late Count George Hoyos and his wife, at Soos near St. Pölten—a typical Austrian *château* in lovely country, with a ruined tower which, together with the house, was being restored and made thoroughly comfortable by the Countess. Findlay and his very charming wife—a great ornament to our Embassy—were there, so that we made up almost an English party, not the least interesting member of

which was Countess Hoyos's father, old Mr. Whitehead of torpedo fame.

The Hoyos family are remarkably gifted and almost cosmopolitan. One of the daughters was married to the German Minister at Athens, Count Plessen, while another was the wife of the late Prince Herbert Bismarck. And this reminds me that Count Bismarck (as he then was) came to Vienna the year before and called one morning at the Embassy. As we happened to have a biggish dinner that evening, I asked him to excuse short notice and join our party. A good many of our guests, including, I remember, the Archduke Louis Victor, formed part of a section of society that still holds in honour the old Austrian traditions, and by whom certain painful events in the national history are not forgotten and still less forgiven. When, therefore, Count and Countess Bismarck were announced, a sudden chill seemed to come over the company. It did not last long, however, and the entertainment went off quite satisfactorily, Count Herbert making himself very agreeable. For a short time, nevertheless, the son of the Iron Chancellor lost some of his assurance and looked so ill at ease that I almost repented having inconsiderately exposed him to an unpleasant ordeal. Like his formidable father he could be charming when he chose, and his vigorous vitality was such that it is sad to think of his death when barely past middle age.

During our stay at Soos we went over the magnificent Benedictine Abbey of Melk, a huge, palatial structure, raised high above the Danube, in the finest imaginable position, with a splendid church and library and innumerable historical associations.

Late in August we went as usual to Marienbad, which the Prince of Wales honoured this year for

the first time as *Kurgast*. A certain number of well-known London people were here, no doubt in part attracted by the presence of the most popular of Princes. The chief excitement of this early autumn was of course the serious turn which affairs were taking in South Africa. A rupture with the Boer Government seemed almost unavoidable, and the chances and results of war were freely discussed in the Prince's *entourage*; M. de Soveral among others, I remember, being of opinion that if we were forced into hostilities the struggle could only be short and must end in our favour. These views of one of the shrewdest and most successful of diplomatists, who was likely to have good information from Lourenço Marquez as to the situation, struck me very much at the time, but proved unfortunately erroneous; the fact being that, like most of the people he lived amongst, the Portuguese Envoy evidently underrated the Boer preparations and resources.

There was a great *battue* in the Königswart Thiergarten in honour of the Prince, with the picturesque accompaniment of the crowd of green-coated foresters and beaters customary in Austria on these occasions, and, two days before his departure, H.R.H. dined with us at the Hotel New York with a small party composed of the Metternichs, Lady "Algy" Lennox, Mrs. Chetwynd, Sir Arthur Ellis and his daughter and daughter-in-law, and Lord Ilchester. From Marienbad we went for our *Nachkur* to that most delightful of playgrounds the *Salzkammergut*, and—partly enticed thither by the fact that our Hague friends the "Reggie" de Tuylls had a *chalet* there—settled down for a week at St. Wolfgang on the lovely lake of that name.

We found small but comfortable rooms at the

typical country inn "*Zum weissen Rössl*"—shortly before immortalised in a clever farce bearing that title, and admirably given at the *Deutsche Volkstheater* at Vienna—which lay low down at the water's edge. The weather was as glorious as it usually is in these mountains in September, and everything seemed to point to our holiday tour having a perfect close. Very shortly after our arrival, however, there came a sudden change. It rained in buckets for three days and nights; the steamers, by which means alone our village—pent up between the steep hillside and the lake—communicated with Salzburg at the one end and Ischl at the other, ceased to run, and the water, lashed by the violent wind and rain, rapidly inundated the landing-stage on the ground floor and soon rose nearly to the level of the first floor of our hostelry, of which we remained almost the sole occupants. It was really a curious, though unpleasant, experience to be absolutely cut off, as we were for the inside of a week, from the outer world; even the telegraph failing us entirely for two days. As for public events—the scandals of the Dreyfus case, or the wiles of Oom Paul—we might have been in mid-Atlantic the whole of that week for all we learned of them. We could have got out uphill at the back of the house from a door on the first floor, had not the deluge of rain entirely prevented our stirring from our rooms, and our fellow-prisoner, Lady Adelaide Taylour, who had joined us from the Tyrol bent on sketching excursions round the lovely lake, forewent all hope of putting pencil to paper, and, like Heine's "*Frau Sorge*," took to knitting. The damage done throughout the country was almost incalculable. Ischl and Gmunden were entirely under water; bridges were carried away in all directions; houses fell in



everywhere—no less than twenty-eight being destroyed at Ebensee alone. It was only later on that the full extent became apparent of a catastrophe which embraced the whole upper course of the Danube and of its tributaries, from Suabia into mid Hungary. When at last it became possible to travel along the sadly damaged railway lines, we moved on to beautiful Salzburg—that favourite retreat of Imperial dignitaries in retirement—where we saw a good deal of our former Stockholm and Hague colleagues the Pfusterschmids and Walterskirchens. A drive to Berchtesgaden and to that wonderful emerald in the grim mountain-setting, the Königs-See, was our last crowning impression this year of some of the most perfect scenery in the world.

October came, and with it tidings of the outbreak of the long-impending war and the invasion of Natal by the Boer levies, the first telegrams indeed indicating a retreat of our forces and unpreparedness on our part to meet so bold an advance. In the midst of the excitement caused by the war news I received an unexpected visit from Sir Robert Collins, Comptroller of the Household of the Duchess of Albany, who came to advise me of the arrival at the Hotel Imperial of H.R.H., with the young Duke and Princess Alice. The Duchess had just come from Dresden, he said, in the strictest *incognito* as Lady Arklow, and had not even brought a maid with her. It was, in fact, a complete *escapade* which afforded infinite amusement to the Royal tourists. Their *incognito*, although carefully respected, nevertheless soon became more than transparent when the Duchess went to Baden to see her aunt, the Archduchess Rainer, and assisted at a performance of *haute école* riding, expressly arranged for her at the *Spanische Reitschule*

in the Hofburg. The Royal party dined with us quietly at the Embassy, Lord St. Levan and his niece, Lady Agnes Townshend, being the only other guests. I remember this well, for it was the day on which the news came of our first success at Glencoe, dearly bought by the death of General Penn Symons, followed by the victory of Elandslaagte; the little Duke of Albany—now Duke of Saxe-Coburg—who was fresh from Eton, displaying a genuine British schoolboy's enthusiasm over our alas! transient triumphs. Scarcely ten days after this I was told one morning that Mr. Lavino, the very able correspondent of *The Times* (now transferred to Paris), had a message he wished to telephone to me in person. It was the full account he had just received from Printing House Square of the disaster at Nicholson's Nek. The effect upon me of the distant muffled voice conveying this intelligence, word by word, was more sinister than I can express, and the worst of it was that I had afterwards to transmit it myself to Penzing in the same way, for the Duchess of Cumberland, who took the deepest interest in the war and had asked me to keep her well informed about it.

Amidst these preoccupations, the visit to Vienna of King George of Greece and of his son Prince Nicholas came as a real relief. The King gave me a very long audience, at which he showed all his old cordiality and kindness, and was good enough to come to luncheon with us. I had scarcely seen H.M. since I left his Court in 1888. A curious circumstance of the King's stay at Vienna was its coinciding with that of the young King Alexander of Servia. The two Sovereigns occupied contiguous apartments at the Hotel Imperial, and it afterwards transpired that the impression produced on so shrewd an observer as King George by the ill-starred Alexander was that he was in a strangely

overwrought condition and showed but little reserve or reticence. He had come to Vienna hoping to see the Emperor, which he failed to do, and must consequently have been considerably vexed and humiliated when H.I.M visited King George at the Hotel, passing along a corridor which was full of the Servian King's retinue.

At the beginning of December we made one of our short flights to London, and received a Royal command to dine and sleep at Windsor. It was very generally reported abroad at this time, especially in those quarters which were not all too well disposed towards us, that the Queen had personally been very averse to the war, and had even been with difficulty induced to sanction the measures forced upon her advisers by the uncompromising hostility of the Boer Government. While not presuming to offer an opinion on so delicate a subject as the private sentiments of our late revered Sovereign, I may say with perfect truth that on the occasion of this visit to Windsor, and again during a later one in the following March, one could not but be impressed by the high spirit shown by the aged Queen at this most trying moment of her reign. Far from evincing the discouragement, the desire for peace almost at any price attributed to her, the feelings dominant in her at that period seemed to be those of deep resentment at the insolent challenge of the Boer President, and of disappointment at the unfortunate turn taken by our military operations. The Queen in short was in no meek, desponding mood; she was very keen, very angry, and very determined. That the weary length and the losses of the war clouded, and may perhaps even have shortened, her last days, it were idle to deny, but she lived to see it brought to a triumphant

issue, and, more fortunate than poor, patriotic, much-abused Mary, the name found written on her heart would not have been one of humiliation like Calais, but of victory like Paardeberg. The only guests bidden to Windsor besides ourselves on this occasion were Mr. George Wyndham and Lady Grosvenor, and it was truly good to hear the Secretary for War explain to us, in the smoking-room, the order and number of the reinforcements that were being made ready for despatch to the seat of war, and to feel at the same time how thorough was his grasp of the subject. With this comfort, as it were, we again left England; crossing Germany deeply buried in snow, and reaching, late in the evening of December the 14th, Dresden, where we had to wait some time for the night express to Vienna. I had scarcely seen a paper since leaving London, and, after ordering supper, eagerly turned to the columns of the first I could lay my hand on, reading there, in the short, crushing telegraphic style, the story of Magersfontein and the death of Lord Winchester. Only two days before leaving London, I had been with his aunt, Mrs. Wellesley, and from her had heard that he had been on the point of sending in his papers, but, when the war broke out, had of course abstained from doing so, and accompanied the Coldstreamers to whom he was devoted. Poor "Wilty," whom I well remember as a youth in his grandfather, Lord Rokeby's house, was as gallant a gentleman and soldier as ever lived, and met a soldier's death, as he stood facing the murderous volleys, while directing and controlling his men's fire as they lay. But there was yet more and worse to come.

## CHAPTER XX

### VIENNA, 1900—THE BOER WAR—COURT CEREMONIES —PARTING VISITS—THE END OF A CAREER

THE opening months of the winter of 1899-1900—the last I was to spend in the Austrian capital—were darkened for us all at the Embassy by the adverse course taken at first by the South African war. Irrespective of the galling sense of national discomfiture with which all right-thinking Englishmen entered on the new century, it was especially trying for those who represented England abroad to watch these untoward events too often amidst unfriendly surroundings. At Vienna the pro-Boer movement was mostly artificial, but the close investment of Ladysmith, Sir Redvers Buller's failure at Colenso, the reverses at the Modder River and Stormberg, followed by the Spion Kop disaster, nevertheless successively called forth in the leading organs of the Vienna press manifestations of an uncordial spirit. And these, although only echoes of openly hostile influences at that time rampant at Berlin and throughout Germany, effectually disturbed one's equanimity. Even papers which were known to be in touch with the Ballplatz, such as the *Wiener Zeitung* and *Fremdenblatt*, revealed pro-Boer tendencies; their comments on our military operations being often both unfair and misleading. These sentiments, however, were chiefly confined to the upper middle-class of Austro-Germans who were more or less subject to Pan-German inspiration.

Slatin Pasha, who happened to be then on a visit to his relatives, was extremely indignant at this attitude of his countrymen. He had been amazed, he told me, when meeting some of the leading journalists and literary men at the house of a Vienna industrial magnate, to find them so inimical to us, and at the same time so essentially ignorant of the rights of the affair. They persisted in looking on it as a quarrel we had deliberately fastened on the Transvaal in order to obtain absolute control of its immense mineral wealth;—as in fact a repetition of the Jameson raid on a gigantic scale.

We saw a good deal of the loyal Sir Rudolph Slatin during his annual visits to Vienna, and I was present that winter at a special meeting of the Imperial Geographical Institute, with the Archduke Rainer in the chair, followed by a banquet, both in honour of the gallant Anglo-Austrian soldier and explorer. In spite of his terrible experiences, he remained a thorough *Wienerkind*, and had preserved his simple, cheery, native ways, albeit there could be read—indebly stamped on his features and reflected in his tired eyes, seared by the fierce glare and the sand of the Soudan—the record of twelve years of cruel, debasing captivity, during which, as he told us, one of the greatest physical trials he endured was having to run with naked feet in the burning sand at the bridle-rein of the brutal Mahdi.

But, to return to the distasteful subject of the war, I hasten to bear grateful testimony to the faithful adherence of the Imperial Government throughout it to their traditional policy of friendship for Great Britain. While an ill-informed and, in some cases, possibly corrupt, Press—Dr. Leyds having of course

been at work at Vienna as elsewhere—was following the lead of our enemies in Germany and France, and seeking to malign and turn opinion against us in our contest in South Africa, the sympathies of the Austro-Hungarian Government were never once led astray. And in this respect they simply followed the example and inspiration of the Sovereign. On the occasion of a State Ball at the Hofburg on the 9th of January—the first entertainment that took place at Court after the death of the Empress—unequivocal proof was given by the Emperor of his personal sentiments. At the customary diplomatic *cercle* which preceded the ball, the Ambassadors and Envoys were placed as usual according to the order of the presentation of their credentials. Mgr. Taliani, the Nuncio, who at this Roman Catholic Court was given special precedence, had the Italian Ambassador, Count Nigra, next to him; then came the German Ambassador, Prince Eulenburg, and, after him, in due sequence, the Russian Ambassador, Count Kapnist, the Turkish Ambassador, Mahmoud Nedim, and myself. The French Ambassador, Marquis de Reverseaux, and the Spanish, M. Agüera, came next after me, followed by a long line of Envoys from the other Powers.

The Emperor began the *cercle* by addressing a few words to the Nuncio and to the senior of my colleagues in turn. I had not seen H.M. for some months; in fact not since the outbreak of the war. When he came to where I stood between the Turkish and the French representatives, he greeted me with more even than his habitual graciousness, and, after inquiring about the Queen and just touching upon the difficulties of our campaign in South Africa, H.M. said to me in French in the most marked

manner that he was "entirely on the side of England in the war." So clearly and emphatically did he utter these words that the other Ambassadors standing near me, and their staffs behind them, could not have failed to hear them.<sup>1</sup> In fact, when he had passed on, after speaking to my French and Spanish colleagues, M. de Reverseaux at once turned to me and said: "*Permettez moi de vous féliciter sur la chaleur que l'Empereur a mise à vous dire cela.*" There can indeed be no doubt that the Emperor fully intended to take this opportunity of making known his sentiments, and it is certain that within a few hours the expression of his views was telegraphed to the Governments of all the principal European Powers.

I have been particular in recounting the circumstances of this incident, because I was charged, when I referred to it some time ago in a contribution to one of our leading Reviews, with the grossest dereliction of duty in revealing and publishing matter derived from strictly confidential correspondence. As a matter of fact, the Emperor Francis Joseph never made any concealment whatever of his sentiments in our favour. On receiving about this time his Minister to the Court of Dresden, and hearing from him that the sympathies of the late King Albert of Saxony—the Emperor's life-long friend—were also on our side, H.M. said that he rejoiced to hear it, adding, "*Ich fürchte wir sind beinahe die Einzigen!*"<sup>1</sup> In the same connection I was enabled by the Emperor's direct countenance and assistance to deal effectually—which

<sup>1</sup> A member of my staff at Vienna afterwards told me that not only had he himself heard the words of the Emperor quite distinctly, but that some fifty persons near him must have done so too.

<sup>2</sup> "I am afraid we are almost the only ones!"



was not the case with my colleagues at other Courts—with the scandalous caricatures of the Queen which for a short time flooded the Continent and found their way into some of the Vienna comic papers. These disgraceful productions, together with a number of objectionable postal cards, were almost all introduced from, and designed in, Germany, where no attempt whatever was made to suppress them, as I repeatedly, but in vain, pointed out to my colleague Prince Eulenburg. It will ever be a source of gratification to me to remember that of her late Majesty's diplomatic servants I was probably the only one who had the satisfaction of contributing to the stamping out of this intolerable nuisance in the country where I resided.

But we were fortunately soon to be relieved from the painful strain of these first winter months by Lord Roberts's triumphant advance. And when the news reached Vienna of the relief of Kimberley and finally of Cronje's surrender, it was received by our friends with genuine pleasure, for, with very few exceptions, society had been throughout on our side. Although there is no denying that our organisation and our strategy were freely criticised by military men in this essentially military Empire, the national spirit evoked by the contest, and the sacrifices made by all classes, found nowhere a more generous appreciation than among our old Austrian allies and the chivalrous Hungarians.

In March we were in England once more for a short time, and were commanded to Windsor to dine and sleep—a memorable visit to me, inasmuch as it was the last occasion on which I saw the Queen. The circumstances were happily very different from those attending our last visit in

December, and it was interesting to meet there the wives of the two generals who had borne the brunt of the fighting in Natal, Lady Audrey Buller and Lady White. A pleasant innovation, too, had taken place in the Court arrangements. The Queen, instead of sitting after dinner as of old in the long corridor, adjourned to the white drawing-room, where the household were assembled, the dinner guests being called up to her one at a time. H.M. seemed to me still full of vitality and keen as ever about the war, talking indeed of little else. I have never again beheld Windsor since that day. A few days earlier we had witnessed in the Park and at various points in the streets the extraordinary enthusiasm with which the aged Sovereign was greeted, as she drove on her way to Buckingham Palace, on what was, if I am not mistaken, her last visit to London. No monarch was ever the object of a more imposing and spontaneous outburst of loyalty.

Among the hospitalities of the Court at Vienna are the invitations received by the Ambassadors to the great *chasses* held in the Imperial domains. My first experience of these was a *battue* on a very great scale near Göding in Moravia. It involved a start at six o'clock in the morning in a special train from the Nordbahnhof with a run of sixty-five miles, our party including, besides several colleagues, Prince Alfred Windischgrätz, General Baron Beck—the chief of the Staff and Moltke of the Austrian Army—Prince Montenuovo and others. From Göding we were driven in open breaks and fiakers to the Imperial preserves, where, at the outskirts of the great woods, we did justice to a rough substantial breakfast of sausages and beer or spirits, and were

then placed in line—some twelve or fourteen guns—each attended by his own Jäger and by game-bearers, while a perfect army of foresters and beaters moved on in front. It was really an imposing sight, and to me a complete novelty. Over 3600 head of game were killed—mostly pheasants and hares, with a few partridges—and, *horresco referens*, a fox or two. An excellent luncheon or mid-day dinner, presided over by the *Grand Veneur*, Baron Gudenus, was served in the head forester's cottage, after which we shot again till dark, and did not get back to Vienna much before nine o'clock. At another, much smaller, *chasse*, near Laxenburg, about 1600 head, almost all hares, were shot. The prettiest shooting I saw, however, was in the Island of Lobau in the Danube. The road thither from Vienna passes through the big village of Aspern, out of which the French were driven back into that island by the Archduke Charles, after a bloody two days' battle. A clumsy stone monument in the village marks the site of the transient Austrian victory. Crossing the bridge which replaces that which was burnt by the Imperial troops during the fierce struggle, one reaches the woods and glades—now thickly stocked with pheasants—where the French army was encamped all through June 1809; the baffled conqueror having his headquarters here for some time before issuing forth again to take his revenge on the field of Wagram. The trees under which his tents were pitched and the remains of the earthworks he constructed are still visible. No more interesting and ideal shooting-ground can be imagined.

I was but a poor shot myself compared to my German colleague Prince Eulenburg or the Russian Ambassador, but the most *enragé*, though not alto-

gether the safest, sportsman of our *corps* was our Turkish colleague, Mahmoud Nedim—a gloomy, solitary, discontented man, whose sole passion was shooting. As often happens with Ottomans of the best class, he had but one wife, to whom he was much attached, but could not of course take abroad with him. He constantly applied for leave to go home and see her, but, like other Turkish officials, he suffered from his Sovereign's caprices and was never allowed to absent himself from his post. His case, however, was not to be compared to that of his predecessor, who, in spite of repeated entreaties, was peremptorily denied leave to go to his wife when she was dangerously ill, in fact, dying, at Constantinople. He consequently committed suicide in a fit of despair—clearly a victim of the arbitrary methods of Yildiz Kiosk.

Lent passed away, with its usual accompaniment of evening parties and receptions, at one of which, given by Prince Fürstenberg and his handsome wife, *née* Schönborn, the engagement was announced of the Duke of Cumberland's eldest daughter to Prince Max of Baden—a great event in the Vienna world where the Cumberland family enjoyed unbounded popularity. At musical parties given in honour of this engagement by Princess Metternich-Sandor and Comtesse Eric Kielmansegg, wife of the Statthalter, Fraülein Kurz and Kreisler the violinist—both now so admired in London—made almost their first appearance, and we were much struck with their fine performance.

A fortnight later we were shocked and startled by the news of the dastardly attempt on the life of the Prince of Wales at Brussels, when on his way to Copenhagen. Much sympathy was shown on this occasion at Vienna, and the Emperor made a sur-

prise visit of congratulation to the Embassy on H.R.H.'s escape. It seems scarcely credible—though it is, I happen to know, the fact—that Dr. Leyds thought fit to send the Prince a congratulatory telegram on his preservation. An act of singular effrontery on his part, considering that Brussels was the centre whence he directed the Anglo-phobe campaign against us in the foreign press, and that his calumnious denunciations of England may fairly be held to have inspired the insane attempt of the young Belgian anarchist.

At the Imperial Court, Passion Week is still marked by the ancient ceremony of the Washing of Feet (*Fusswaschung*), which takes place on Maundy Thursday in the great marble Rittersaal of the Hofburg. For the privileged spectators of the function tribunes are erected round the walls of the Hall; one of them, which is reserved for the *Corps Diplomatique*, being placed immediately above the bench where twelve very ancient paupers—dressed for the occasion in sixteenth-century garb (*Alt Deutsche Tracht*), with ruffs—are seated in a row on a slightly raised dais behind a long table covered with a white tablecloth. The other tribunes are filled with Austrian great ladies, and in the body of the Hall stands a crowd of Court dignitaries, high officials, Privy Councillors and others entitled to be present. The Emperor enters with the great Officers of State, followed by all the Archdukes with their households. Some short prayers are now intoned by the Court clergy; the Emperor takes up his position, standing at the head of the long table, while the Archdukes place themselves in line, according to their precedence, along the side of it facing the aged recipients of the Imperial bounty.

Conspicuous among the Princes is the tall, knightly figure of the Archduke Eugene—a younger brother of the Archduke Frederick and of the Queen of Spain—wearing over his general's uniform the picturesque, flowing white mantle, with the large black cross on it, of Grand Master of the Teutonic Order.

Then comes the rhythmic tramp of infantry, as, preceded by minor Court officials, twelve of the Palace Guard file into the Hall—each man bearing a large wooden tray with several dishes. They come to attention in line conveniently near the Emperor and the respective Archdukes, who take the dishes from the trays and arrange them with great dexterity on the table in front of each old man, the Emperor setting the example. After a brief pause the dishes, none of which have been touched, are replaced on the trays by the same hands and carried away by the guardsmen. Another pause, and a second course is brought in and dealt with in the same manner, followed by a third and fourth course, after which the tables are removed. During the intervals, the Emperor stoops across and says a few words to the aged waifs who are nearest to him: "How old are you?" "Ninety odd, Majestät," comes the answer in wavering tones, followed by the Emperor's hearty: "*Sie sehen ja ganz frisch aus!*" Behind the old gaffers stand a row of their proud relatives—mostly women in stuff gowns and shawls—and these humble folk the kindly Emperor includes in his gracious smile and nod as he speaks, for he does not go through the solemnity in the least perfunctorily but in right good earnest. The tables being cleared away, Court attendants remove the stocking from the right foot of each veteran, and the Emperor, closely followed by chamberlains bearing a

gold basin and ewer and fine linen, then goes down on one knee and shuffles, so to speak, in this lowly attitude, along the line of the twelve, pouring a little water over, and drying their feet in turn. On reaching the end of the row, he stands up, and coming down the line again, hangs a chain to which is attached a purse round the neck of each. It is impossible to bring home to those who have not witnessed it the earnestness, combined with a charming *bonhomie*, displayed by H.M. through the whole of this curious and elaborate function. An interesting feature of it too is that the old people are fetched from, and taken back to, their homes with their relatives in Court carriages, to which, after the ceremony, one sees them tottering, each on the arm of a stalwart guardsman, while the dishes, of what to them has so far been a Barmecide feast, are carried behind them in immense wooden boxes, which also contain the green earthenware jug and pewter mug, both handsomely decorated with the Imperial arms, with which they are presented, and for which later they readily find eager purchasers.

There are two other great religious functions deserving of notice in which the Emperor personally takes part. On Easter eve he attends service in state at a small chapel in the south-west corner of the Burg, and thence follows the Host on foot round the inner quadrangle of that Palace to the Burgkapelle at the opposite end, attended by the whole of his Court. The procession is a very fine one seen from the windows of the Palace where places are always reserved for the foreign diplomatists. Still more striking is the great procession of *Corpus Domini* that winds its way through the main streets of the *Innere Stadt* from and back to the porch of St. Stephen's, halting at several

points by the way, where chapels are erected, and a few prayers are said. A magnificent and endless *cortège*; the banners and vestments of the clergy, the uniforms and accoutrements of the troops of all arms, and, above all, the gorgeous Hungarian guard, mounted on grey Arabs with leopard-skin saddle-cloths—making a perfect feast of colour; the Emperor going on foot the whole way, immediately after the baldachin held over the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna who carries the Host. A special interest attaches to these impressive, old-world ceremonies, religiously handed down as they have been from the days of the Holy Roman Empire, much of the etiquette observed at them having been imported by the Habsburgs from Spain. There is a certain pathos, too, about them at present which cannot but appeal to the thoughtful. For many years, in the brighter period of the now so heavily clouded reign, these functions were doubly magnificent, for the beautiful Empress and all the Archduchesses took part in them in the full splendour of State robes and Crown jewels<sup>1</sup>—a sight unparalleled at that time elsewhere in Europe. The pomp remains, though shorn of half its attraction, and still the aged Emperor, wifeless and son-less, treads the old paths and goes through the time-honoured duties alone, bravely, patiently, and in all things conscientiously as becomes a true Apostolic King.

These high festivals and pageants of the great Church which, despite the contemptible "*Los von Rom*" propaganda attempted by Schoenerer and consorts, holds unquestioned sway throughout the Empire, bring to my mind the acute stage that was reached by the Anti-Semitic movement towards the close of my

<sup>1</sup> The Empress, assisted by the Archduchesses, used to perform the ceremony of the *Fusswaschung* on twelve old women.



tenure of the Embassy at Vienna. The more immediate cause of this recrudescence of Judæophobia was a sensational ritual murder case tried in the autumn of 1899 before the Criminal Court at Pisek in Bohemia. The accused—a Moravian Jew of Polna, of the name of Hilsner—was charged with having, at the approach of the Jewish Passover, enticed a Christian servant girl, with whom he was acquainted, into the woods near Polna, and after murdering her, having extracted the blood from her body and taken it to the local Rabbi. The corpse, it appeared, had actually been found in a strangely bloodless condition, and the trial, which was conducted in a very unfair, vindictive spirit, ended in Hilsner being found guilty and sentenced to death.<sup>1</sup> An immense sensation was produced by this affair. Professor Masaryk, a distinguished lawyer who had defended Hilsner, was prevented from delivering his course of lectures at the Prague University, and the old Anti-Jewish spirit in Bohemia and Moravia being roused to a dangerous pitch, Jewish houses were pillaged and set fire to at Holleschau and other places.

This revival of the cruel accusation of murder for ritual purposes, first brought against the Jews in dark, mediæval times, caused great concern to the heads of the Hebrew communities in Western Europe, who feared that it might spread to France—where the *affaire Dreyfus* had already caused much ill-blood—and even to England. When in London in the autumn, I was approached on the subject by the Messrs. Rothschild, who are old friends of mine. It appeared from what they told me that some of the most prominent English Catholics, shocked by the

<sup>1</sup> The case was subsequently tried again on appeal and the sentence commuted to imprisonment.

abominable ritual murder charges, intended, with the approval of the late Cardinal Vaughan, to memorialise the Holy See, with the view of obtaining an authoritative pronouncement from Rome of the same character as those formerly issued by several Popes, from Innocent IV. to Clement XIV., stigmatising these accusations as utterly wicked and calumnious. I had several interviews about this question with Mr. Leopold de Rothschild and the distinguished Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler, and gladly undertook to try and obtain the support of my colleague the Nuncio at Vienna in the move that was contemplated at Rome. Mgr. Taliani, since raised to the Cardinalate, was a friendly, liberal-minded prelate. The Holy See, he said, had, for centuries past, endeavoured to shield the Jews from misrepresentation and persecution, but, as regarded the acerbity of the feelings towards them in Austria, I knew, as well as he did, that the hostile movement against them had for the most part political and party motives at the bottom of it. He assured me, nevertheless, that he preserved a perfectly open mind on these questions, and promised to make known at the Vatican what I told him of the sentiments of our English Catholics regarding them. Some hint no doubt reached the Austrian clergy from Rome, for the violent campaign which had originated in the Polna murder promptly came to an end.

The Anti-Semitic movement is one of the most serious evils with which public life in Austria is afflicted, and there is no more pernicious influence in Vienna than that of its bigoted, overbearing leader, the Burgomaster Dr. Lueger, who is unfortunately gifted with the fluent oratorical powers of a born demagogue. The folly of his passionate crusade against the Jews was soon made patent

by the disastrous economic results to which it led.<sup>1</sup>

The Austrian Government wisely do their best to check Anti-Semitism, to which the Emperor himself is strongly opposed, rightly considering it both unprincipled and dangerous. "I will tolerate no Jew-baiting (*Judenhetze*) in my dominions," he said to the Chief Rabbi of Prague after the excesses mentioned above. Among other ill-effects, the Anti-Semitic craze has unfortunately contributed to the growing estrangement between Vienna and Buda-Pest; the dislike felt in the old Imperial city for the Jewish influences which are no doubt very powerful in the capital of Hungary, being expressed by the term of *Judo-Magyaren* applied to Hungarians in general.

To the city of the *Judo-Magyars* we went in May, and on our farewell visit alas! It was the race-week, and Pesth was full of our friends, but the weather was so exceptionally damp and cold that it might have been a wet Ascot, and the racecourse offered few attractions. But there were a good many dinners and parties, at the Féstetics, Andrassy, Apponyi and other houses, where we had our last look at the brilliant Hungarian society, in which I may again say that the beauty of some of the ladies is remarkable, and among them two Esterházy sisters, married, the one to her kinsman Count Michael Esterházy, and the other to Count Sándor Andrassy, being indeed fair to behold. But the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lueger and his followers were also amongst our greatest detractors during the South African war, and he was on one occasion severely taken to task by the Emperor for an offensive Anglophobe speech he made at a public meeting.

great centre of amusement for the gay world of Pesth in summer-time is the Park Club, situated in the *Stadtwäldchen*, which in the Hungarian capital answers to the Prater at Vienna. The perfect equality in it of its members of both sexes, and the lavish style in which it is decorated and furnished, make it quite a curiosity among clubs, while, as regards its luxurious appointments, they are characteristic of a society in which a certain partiality for display and splendour might perhaps be traced to far distant Asiatic descent. In no capital, however, can there be a more perfect lounge than the hospitable Park Club, where we spent many pleasant evenings, the honours of the Club being admirably done by its President, Count Paul Szapáry, and his Polish wife.

When I left Pesth the political situation bore a promising complexion. The Minister President, M. de Széll, was then backed by an immense majority in Parliament, which certainly held firmly to the maintenance and the integrity of the Union, and the leaders in Hungarian political life—with the exception of M. Kossuth and the then comparatively unimportant party of Independence—were generally sound in their views respecting the fundamental, pragmatic conditions of that Union, namely, a common Sovereign, a common Army, and the conduct in common of the foreign relations of the Empire. A great change has in the last few years taken place in the aspect of affairs, and the present outlook cannot but cause the deepest concern to all well-wishers of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Unfortunately, in those questions which tend to gratify the national aspirations and *amour-propre* the Hungarian race knows no differences of opinion, and has of late been disposed

to act on the maxim that Austria's tribulations are Hungary's opportunity.

We returned to Vienna in time for the end of the racing-season, and for its principal event, the Austrian Derby, which this year was run on the 4th of June in lovely weather. Some of the best horses in the Empire and in Germany compete for the blue ribbon of the Austrian turf, and, next to the Grand Prix at Paris, there is no greater racing holiday and no gayer spectacle of its kind out of England than this gathering on the Vienna Freudenau. The Vienna ladies certainly look their best and smartest on the occasion and do credit to the world-renowned dress-makers of that capital. The *Hauptallee* of the Prater, lined with a four-fold row of splendid chestnut-trees, is crowded from end to end with carriages, mostly the light Vienna *fiakers*, their drivers racing the wiry, fast-trotting *juckers* at the top of their speed, to and from the course. The stream of carriages in rapid motion, up and down the three-mile-long avenue, is indeed prodigious, but these *fiaker* folk, who form a curious and popular guild of their own, and are the incarnation of the Vienna local fun and humour, are fortunately very expert whips. One of them, a man called Bratfisch (since dead), a great character, well known as a singer of *Schnaderhüpferl*, or popular songs in the Vienna dialect, was at Mayerling on the night of the terrible tragedy enacted there, and was probably one of the few persons cognisant of its real facts. The way in which those facts have been scrupulously kept from the public knowledge is indeed surprising, and reflects the greatest credit on the persons concerned. One of the guests of the Crown Prince at Mayerling on that fatal night was

the late Count "Joserl" Hoyos, whom I had known well of old. Of him it is related that immediately after the catastrophe he hurried to Vienna and sought an audience of the Emperor, at which he volunteered to take upon himself the death of the Crown Prince. He was willing, he said, to declare that he had shot him by accident in a *battue* that had taken place that day, and was ready to leave the country at once for good, and bear in exile the odium of having caused the death of the heir to the throne. The Emperor, it need scarcely be said, would not listen to Count Hoyos' chivalrous offer.

For us the brilliant gathering on the Freudenau was a day of leave-taking from many of the kind friends we had made during our too brief stay of barely four years at Vienna. The Vienna world disperses immediately after the Derby day, and, having myself already run my diplomatic course to the end, I was prepared to make immediate room for my successor, much though I had hoped to spend one more summer in the most perfect of countries for summer-holiday making. It so happened that a few days later the Emperor laid, in great state, the foundation-stone of a church to be erected in memory of his Jubilee, most of the Ambassadors being present at the ceremony. At the close of it, H.M. addressed a few words to each of us, and, after greeting my wife and me most graciously, observed somewhat pointedly that he was about to leave for his habitual stay at Ischl and, being unable to grant any audiences before then, hoped to find me at Vienna on his return in the early autumn. On my then inquiring whether I had his Majesty's leave to let Lord Salisbury know this, he replied that he certainly wished me to do

so. To the Emperor's kind initiative, therefore, I owe the few months' very welcome respite allowed me before my final retirement. Previous to the departure of the Court a loyal demonstration on a great scale, got up by the Vienna choral societies and by numerous bodies of veterans, fire brigades, workmen's and other associations of the capital and its neighbourhood, took place at Schönbrunn in anticipation of the Sovereign's seventieth birthday, which fell on the 18th of August. A serenade was given in front of the Schönbrunn Palace by an admirable choir of 4600 voices, and this was followed by a monster *Fackelzug*, or march past, of 26,000 men, all bearing torches or coloured lanterns; each society of a different colour. It was a remarkable sight, and, as far as we were concerned, made a memorable conclusion to the series of pageants we had assisted at during our sojourn at the Imperial Court.

Public attention at this period was entirely engrossed by the grave crisis in China and the fate of the European residents besieged in the Legation quarter at Peking. We were ourselves greatly concerned about one of them, Mr. Bryan Clarke-Thornhill, of Rushton, Northamptonshire, who had served with me at The Hague for two years. There was something almost tragical in the fact of his being at Peking at this conjuncture. From The Hague he had been transferred to the Embassy at Paris, and was then promoted to be First Secretary to the Legation in China, an appointment he held for a considerable time, without, however—owing to the precarious state of his father's health—proceeding to his post. He retired from the service in March 1900, on succeeding to the property at his father's death, and almost immediately

afterwards started on a journey to the Far East which, by what seemed a strange fatality, brought him on a visit to Sir Claude Macdonald just before Peking was cut off from the outer world. For a short time he was of course given up for lost with all the rest of the besieged residents. He did excellent service during the siege, and his gifts of observation and sense of humour are such that his recollections of it, if he could be induced to give them to the world, would be the best of reading. Keenly watching as I did this truly agonising crisis, I could not but chafe at the manner in which the offer of the Japanese to despatch a considerable force—which they had quite ready—to the rescue of the victims, was foiled by the selfish fears, not to say the intrigues, of some of the Powers. My personal opinion at the time was that we ought to have taken upon ourselves to urge Japan to send off her relieving expedition at once, assuring her at the same time that we would “see her safely through” the business. What Power would have risked incurring the odium of preventing such a work of salvage? Instead of this, the irresolution and lack of real accord of the Powers, the want of decision of some, and the jealous fears and suspicions of others, almost brought about what would have been the most hideous massacre of modern times.<sup>1</sup>

Amidst the obsession of this nightmare of the Far East, it was a pleasing contrast to have to represent the Queen at the marriage of Princess Marie Louise of Cumberland, which took place at Gmunden at the beginning of July, but was unfortunately marred by atrocious weather. I was charged with the Royal pre-

<sup>1</sup> I remember being much gratified by a letter from my old friend Sir Nicholas O'Connor thanking me for some plain language I had permitted myself to use in despatches at this crisis.



sent for the bride, and, after delivering it at a special audience, was kept to lunch at a *Familientafel* at which, inclusive of the family of the Duke of Cumberland, the Princes and Princesses who had come for the wedding numbered no less than thirty-two. Besides the King of Denmark, whom I saw here for the first and only time, and the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden, whom I had not met since the christening at Stockholm of their grandchild—now by the way engaged to Princess Margaret of Connaught—the most interesting and picturesque figure at the wedding ceremony was the venerable, widowed Queen of Hanover—then already in her eighty-third year—who put off her mourning for the occasion, and was dressed entirely in white, wishing, she said in jest to her ladies, “to appear as *Pio Nono*.” She was seated in the chancel, next to the Emperor, who had come over from Ischl for the ceremony; his grand-daughter, the Archduchess Elizabeth, and two daughters of the Archduke Frederick being the bridesmaids. The numerous and valuable presents that came from Hanover and Brunswick were a striking and significant feature of these festivities. The Hanoverian *Ritterschaft* sent a deputation including Schulenburgs, Grotes, Bernstorffs, and other great Hanoverian names, with a handsome silver *surtout de table*, of which the centre-piece was the horse of Hanover *rampant*, and there was also a set of water-colours—views in and about Hanover—for which a subscription had been made by all classes, notwithstanding the attempts of the German authorities to prevent its collection. Certainly signs were not wanting that a strong Guelph feeling still subsisted in the Duke’s ancient hereditary dominions.

The few weeks still left to us in Austria were taken up by some farewell visits in the country and by our annual cure at Marienbad. On our way to that old haunt of ours, we stayed at Frischau in Moravia, a charming place belonging to my old friend, Countess Stadion-Lobkowitz, where we spent a couple of very happy days, and much admired the splendid woods, containing many really giant oaks, that form a girdle round the property. Our time was short, however, and we reluctantly took leave of our hostess; on my part, I confess, not without what the French call *un serrement de cœur*. At Marienbad we found Lady Radnor and her charming daughter, Lady Lathom, the Duc de Luynes, General de Galliffet, the Standishes, Countess Tassilo Féstetics, Sir Arthur Ellis, and a few other friends, and while there, were successively shocked by the news of the assassination of the King of Italy and by the very unexpected death of the Duke of Saxe Coburg. On leaving Marienbad we stayed a day or two with Princess Lobkowitz, *née* Sternberg, and her family, whom we had met at Frischau, and had promised to visit at her *château* near Pilsen. My two younger sons—George, who had been invalided from the Cape after a short campaign with Roberts's Horse, and Hugo, who had not long before left Eton—accompanied us, and with the young people of the house made up a very merry party, contributing not a little to the general amusement by their musical performances. A curious old house is Krimitz, with old-fashioned gardens and views over the broad dusty plain that surrounds the Austrian *beeropolis* Pilsen. We were most hospitably entertained by the Princess and her sons, who quite surprised me by their undisguised Czech sentiments and their distaste for everything that was German. It

is indeed remarkable how strongly the heads of even great families of German origin, such as the Harrachs, Schönborns, and even one branch of the Schwarzenbergs, have committed themselves to the national Bohemian idea.

From Krimitz we went on to Prince Trauttmannsdorff's fine castle of Bischofteinitz, a former episcopal abode—half palace and half monastery—which came into the family during the great commotions of the Thirty Years' War. The Prince is one of the best shots in Austria, and the walls of a long gallery in the house bristle with stags' heads and antlers, while large stuffed eagles and other birds of prey hang down from the vaulted roof with outstretched wings—an appropriate decoration for a real home of sport. Magnificent woods full of game cover the estate, and through these I was taken long drives by my host and had the chance of an occasional shot at a stag or a roebuck. There is no more amiable family in Vienna society than the Trauttmannsdorffs, and we were indeed loth to part from them on starting for a twelve hours' journey to our next visit at Aschach, on the Danube, above Linz.

We had to drive as far as Pilsen, across the great monotonous plains, passing through straggling Bohemian villages with huge barns and untidy farm-buildings, along ragged, dusty roads where regiments of geese filed past in charge of some small maiden like those I had read of in childhood in Grimm's unforgettable tales. A few delightful days with Count and Countess Alfred Harrach in their sunny arcaded *château* at Aschach by the blue river, and we went on again to a farewell visit to the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland at beautiful Gmunden. Here we stayed only two nights as Their Royal Highnesses were about

to start for Copenhagen, but when we departed, on our way to Ischl, I felt more than ever assured that we were leaving behind us in this Royal home very true and kind friends.

The Emperor was still at Ischl with his two daughters, the Archduchesses Gisela and Marie Valérie, and on H.M. hearing of our arrival, an invitation to the Imperial table was brought us by Prince R. Liechtenstein. After dinner H.M. touched upon a variety of subjects—the appointment of Count Waldersee to the command of the combined European forces in China among others—and then referred to the demonstrations of loyalty and attachment which had just marked the celebration of his birthday; dwelling more particularly on the gratification he had derived from the friendly tone of the English press on that occasion. He rejoiced to find that his sincere regard for England was so well understood by English public opinion. We left Ischl the next day for St. Wolfgang and Salzburg, and were back at Vienna on the 3rd of September.

On the 8th I had my farewell audience and delivered my letters of recall, being received by the Emperor with even more than his habitual condescension and cordiality. H.M. was pleased to express his satisfaction at the way in which I had acquitted myself of my duties, and added, with much warmth of manner, that he wished me to remember that I left in him a very sincere friend. In the afternoon he came to the Embassy to say good-bye to my wife and sat with us for some time. My wife asked him to sign a photograph of himself—one of the many done of him by Pietzner—which she had prepared for the occasion. This he did at once in his usual kindly way, and then noticing another one—a small group representing him surrounded by his

grandchildren, one of whom is seated on his knee—he asked her whether she would like that signed too, and forthwith wrote his name on it.

My mission to the Emperor Francis Joseph was in every sense the culminating honour of a long and much chequered career. No Ambassador accredited to him can preserve more grateful recollections than mine of the invariable kindness and thoughtfulness of the most high-minded and beneficent of Sovereigns. An admirable portrait of him by Pochwalski<sup>1</sup> presented to me by H.M. hangs on the wall of my London home, and when I look up at the shrewd, kindly eyes, and see the smile lighting the rugged, careworn features, I seem to hear once more the majestic and thrilling strains of the “Gott erhalte,” and feel—because I know—how urgent is the need the prayer it breathes, and how precious the life on which it calls down blessings.

I left Vienna on the 16th of September 1900—fifty-one years and a few days after entering the diplomatic service.

<sup>1</sup> The Order of St. Stephen is generally conferred on Ambassadors retiring from Vienna, but as a regulation existed prohibiting the acceptance of foreign decorations by the diplomatic servants of the British Crown—a rule no longer, I believe, strictly enforced in quite recent years—this was replaced, in the case of my predecessors and myself, by the much more valuable and interesting gift of a portrait which the Emperor caused to be painted for the occasion.

## CHAPTER XXI

### VALEDICTORY

HALF a century spent abroad in the service of the Crown more than unfits the retired diplomatist for the short span that may be left to him at home in England. In my case not only was a lifetime's occupation gone, but it was far too late to think of replacing it by any serious or profitable employment. Much the same has of course been the fate of the majority of my colleagues, with the exception of those fortunate few who have come back to old family homes and to the duties which these entail. All public careers, it will be rightly said, must end in comparative nothingness and obscurity, but the oblivion into which those who have attained the highest rank in diplomacy lapse on their retirement seems to me almost distinctive of that profession.

There is in fact little of the proverbial *otium cum dignitate* in the lot of the retired diplomatist; or—to dot the i's—more than enough of the first, and but little of the second. To the British public at large, whose conception of the service is somewhat hazy, and which scarcely distinguishes between a Consul and an Ambassador, the man on the shelf is naturally unknown. But, curiously enough it appears to me, he counts almost as little with the great department under which he has served so long and with the Court which it has been his duty to

represent, often at no small personal sacrifice. From the day of his retirement he practically loses all touch with those who have been wont to look for, and trust to, his counsel or opinion in unquestionably important affairs. His experience, which might be of value to his former chiefs, is treated by them, so to speak, as of no account; while, if he should venture to raise an independent voice on matters which have been the study of his life, he is liable to be rebuked for culpable indiscretion, and even threatened with severe pains and penalties.

Certain special circumstances possibly brought this sudden and complete breach with the past more strongly home to me than to others. The eminent statesman under whom I had served for a number of years had just resigned and withdrawn to his splendid home at Hatfield; the seals of the Foreign Office passing into the able hands of its present occupant. I had thus no farewell interview with the Foreign Secretary, and disappeared quite unnoticed from the service as might any of our numerous Vice-Consuls. As for the Queen, she was still at Balmoral and in rapidly failing health. Mr. "Alec" Yorke, whom I chanced to meet in October, shortly after my return to England, told me, I remember, of the great change he had noticed in her Majesty when he was in waiting just before in Scotland. Although the Queen resided for six weeks at Windsor on her return South, it was generally understood that she was living there in complete retirement and received only those persons it was indispensable she should see. We, therefore, did not have the audience to take leave of the Sovereign which is invariably accorded to

retiring Ambassadors and their wives. By some unfortunate mischance, too, an official invitation to the Royal obsequies at Windsor did not reach me in time, having been sent to a wrong address. In fact it was only at the eleventh hour that I succeeded in obtaining cards of admission to the balcony overlooking the Friary Court at St. James's Palace, and thence saw the memorable funeral procession of the great Queen whose phenomenal reign synchronised with more than sixty years of my life, and whom I had served longer, I believe, than any of my fellow-workers in diplomacy.

But enough of this. The contrast between the complete effacement into which the ex-diplomatist subsides, and a life in which outward show—or what the French well describe as *représentation*—necessarily has so large a part; the being suddenly cut off from those exclusive channels of information which give to a diplomatic career an interest and fascination of its own, not to be met with, I think, in any other branch of the public service; chiefly, perhaps, the sense of having become half a foreigner, and feeling scarcely at home in his own country—all these have the effect of diverting his thoughts from the fast fleeting present to the long dead past. In the waning days that can hold but few interests or attractions—none of them of an absorbing character—the mind almost mechanically clings to, and seeks refuge in, that very different past, and existence becomes, as it were, a silent retrospect. The long vista of years gone by fills in the now empty canvas; and the *désœuvré* ex-diplomatist, living in some quiet corner, on too often straitened means, calls up the



countless pictures stored away in his memory, and takes count of the events and changes he has witnessed and was wont to chronicle day by day.

And, within my own personal experience, wonderful indeed have been some of those changes. The Piedmont which, at the very outset of my career, I found still reeling under the crushing blow of Novara, figures now as a mere province of the fair Kingdom whose sterling nucleus it became, and which it raised by its exertions to the rank of a first-class European Power. From the ruins of the splendid but flashy Empire which I heard proclaimed on the Place de l'Hotel de Ville, and saw cruelly shattered eighteen years later, France has issued forth in entirely novel guise. Strong, but collected and confident in her might; as prudent and practical as she is prosperous; no longer an uncertain, disturbing element, but a great conservative force of infinite value to the stability of European peace; and, for this country, the best of friends and associates, and, I would fain hope, of potential allies. Yet more complete has been the transformation—whether for the good of the world the future alone can tell—of the Germany of my youth. The colossus who welded its loose, disjointed parts together with the hammer of a Wotan, but whom I first recollect as barely holding his own against Austria in the Frankfort *Bundestag*, has long since gone to his rest in the cold shade of his oaks at Schönhausen, and a gifted and brilliant potentate now wields the power created by him, spasmodically arousing the wonder or the apprehensions of mankind. The feeble, easy-going, friendly Germany of old has indeed vanished; its grand national spirit and genius freely emerging from the complicated trammels—amazing

when one thinks of them—by which they were confined so long. Of the future destinies by sea and land of the restored Empire who can venture to prophesy?

But far more pregnant and astonishing than all these changes is the revolution—for no less word can express it—which is running its course in the Far Eastern world. The marvellous achievements on which our press, and notably *The Times*, intone their pæans to us every morning, do not properly come within the bounds of my official Recollections, but there are few men now alive to whom they can appeal with greater force than to myself. For I well remember witnessing the meeting, just forty-six years ago, in the harbour of Point de Galle, of two brothers:<sup>1</sup> the one bound to, and the other returning from, the Far East—the latter taking home with him the treaty by which, under great pressure, he had obtained a right of entry into Japan, until then hermetically closed to the outer world. To me, therefore, the complete transformation of that country since those days, and since its internal revolution in 1868, may well appear a greater marvel even than to others. But, though yielding to no one in my admiration of the valour, the intelligence, and the absolutely perfect organisation evinced by a wonderful people, I cannot but view with profound misgiving the mastery they are acquiring in those distant regions, and which they could scarcely have attained without our countenance. While I frankly own that race prejudice in part biases me on this point, I am none the less convinced that ere long the Powers in any degree interested in the Pacific will have to count with a formidable, aggressively

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Elgin and the Honble. Sir Frederick Bruce.

spreading Empire, which must seek to enlarge its boundaries for its active, teeming population, and can only do so at their cost. Well may statesmen at The Hague and in Paris already ponder over these possibilities, which already give rise to anxious speculation at Sydney and Melbourne, while here in London we are being eloquently lectured on the sublime virtues of *bushido*. For myself I am glad that I shall be spared seeing the growth of that yellow-race dominion over one-third of the globe whose portentous dawn we are now beholding. *Liberavi animam meam*, though I am fully aware that the sentiments I have disclosed will find but scant favour with those who may chance to read these concluding pages.

To sum up my experiences, a diplomatic life, in spite of its many drawbacks and inconveniences, is certainly one of the most interesting and instructive in which a young Englishman can engage. Such at least would be my answer to any father asking my advice on the point, and I remember saying this to the late Lord — when I met him many years ago at Battle Abbey. The son about whom he then consulted me has since made a brilliant and unusually rapid career, and has recently displayed great qualities in the conduct of affairs, under exceptionally difficult circumstances, at one of our chief Embassies. Ability alone, however, will not suffice to ensure success in the service. In no profession, perhaps, is the man whom his duties keep constantly abroad more dependent on the solicitude and backing of friends and connections at home. Given equal abilities and qualifications, the race will be with the competitor whose interests are carefully looked after at headquarters. Real merit makes its way in diplomacy

as elsewhere, but it must be of the highest order to hold its own against inferior capacity subserved by political or family influence. The era of competitive examinations—of which the late Lord Bloomfield used to say that they would at any rate keep out the half-witted—has of course profoundly modified the service I entered, thank Heaven! in its more easy, ignorant, benighted days. The diplomatic coverts are no longer so strictly preserved as of old, but some care is still taken—and it is right that it should be taken—in the allotment of places at the greater *battues*.

Yet one word more and I have done. The well-known pleasantry of the German humourist that “a man cannot be too careful in the choice of his parents”<sup>1</sup> might, it seems to me, be applied in a more special sense to the service I have loved and left. But, taking my cue seriously from so light a jest, I would say that, in my opinion, the aspiring diplomatist cannot be too careful in the choice of his wife. As I write these words—a parting tribute to our fair sisters—I am thinking of the inestimable worth, to the ablest even of our representatives, of a pleasing, tactful woman—a real helpmate—in the all-important social branch of his duties. I go so far even as to ask myself whether, at one or other of our Embassies and Legations, the more valuable element, from what I would call a strictly professional point of view, may not be the lady who presides over it with a grace and a *cachet* all her own—gaining for it the popularity which tells so greatly in public affairs—rather than her husband delving diligently in his study below, to the despair of a long-suffering “Chancery.”

<sup>1</sup> *Man kann nicht vorsichtig genug sein in der Wahl seiner Eltern.*

Conversely, too, I cannot but think with regret of men I have known and greatly liked, whose fair diplomatic prospects have been checked, if not damaged, by an injudicious, or ill-assorted union. For in diplomacy marriage may either make or mar.

And now I have really had my last say, and it is more than time to ring down the curtain on these diffuse reminiscences. With the well-known and distinguished diarist, in his graphic account of King Edward's first Council—though he be perhaps the last man I would care to plagiarise—I feel that the world to which I belonged has well-nigh passed away.



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